

PN
153
D4
XX

The
**Serio-Comic
Profession**

By L. J. DE BEKKER

A BOOK FOR WRITERS,
AND FOR SUCH READ-
ERS AS MAY BE INTER-
ESTED IN THEM AND
THEIR CRAFT

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO

presented to the
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO
by
JAMES A. LEFTWICH

~~WES A. LEFTWICH~~

Property of
The Newspaper Club, Inc.
133 West Forty-first Street,
New York

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE CLUBHOUSE

Given by _____

THE SERIO-COMIC PROFESSION

COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

For the privilege of reprinting certain of these little essays, the Author is under obligation to the *New York Sun*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Evening Post*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which publications they originally appeared.

In the case of articles published here for the first time, the Author retains the rights to publish and sell in Great Britain and in her Colonies, including Canada and Australia, the right to abridge or enlarge, the right to translate into all languages, including the Scandinavian, first and second serial rights throughout all the world, dramatic rights, moving picture rights, and any other rights usually claimed by a publisher to the detriment of a writer. He is aware that none of these rights will be valuable in this particular book, but sets them forth as a warning to himself and others.

L. J. de B.

THE
SERIO-COMIC PROFESSION

A Book for Writers, and for Such
Readers as May Be Interested
in Them and Their Craft

Property of
The Newspaper Club, Inc.
180 West Forty-first Street
New York
NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE CLUB'S LIBRARY
By L. J. de BEKKER
Given by 

Author: The Stokes Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians; The University Dictionary of Music and Musicians; Compiler: A History of the United States by the Presidents; and for Twenty-five Years a Newspaper Man and Publishers' Hack



BROOKLYN—NEW YORK
The Writers' Publishing Co.

**Copyrighted for the Author
by The Writers' Publishing
Co., Brooklyn-New York, U.
S. A., 1915. Application for
entry at Stationer's Hall
pending.**

**Set up and electrotyped.
First Edition of 1,000 print-
ed in August, 1915. The
Writers' Publishing Com-
pany, Brooklyn-New York,
U. S. A.**

Contents

Title	Page
Why It's Serio-Comic.....	7
Boss Lord's Opinions.....	18
Human Interest Real.....	50
Makes Verse to Order.....	60
The Critic Confesses.....	68
Joke's Origin Traced.....	73
Becoming a Publisher.....	80
Literary Goldbricks.....	87
Story Weeklies Pass.....	93
Under the Black Flag.....	101
Cost of Making Books.....	111
Defects in Copyright.....	119

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

WHY IT'S SERIO-COMIC

Middlemen See to It that the Joke Is
on the Writers.

"But why Serio-Comic?"

It is surprising the number of my colleagues who repeated this question when I talked over my plans for this little book with them. Driven to my last defense, for the title of a book is important, as it lingers in catalogues long after its contents have been forgotten, I made use of the Socratic method.

"Such a title would not suggest to your mind a book dealing with the Law in any of its branches, would it?"

"No," admitted the sanest newspaper man of my acquaintance. "I remember Dr. Johnson's reluctance to brand any gentleman with the word 'lawyer,' and I confess to you that in my mind, the legal profession is unpleasantly associated with the duty which renders it most conspicuous, washing dirty linen in public. It's **serious** enough to the litigants, Heaven knows, but I own that if there are any comic elements involved in the practice of law, I have never been confronted with them, except in the pages of '*The Green Bag*' and allied publications."

"Perhaps to your way of thinking, and I know your familiarity with Rabelais and Erasmus, the Serio-Comic Profession is that which, a few centuries ago, embraced them all? Taking the Alpha and Omega of comedy and seriousness from the daily newspapers, you will offer in evidence the utterances of the Reverend 'Billy' Sunday, and those of his Eminence the Cardinal Primate of Belgium, and say that the casual reader will glance at the title of my book, and mistake it for a treatise on theology?"

"No. I grant you that this might be the impression left on a mind influenced by such Master Humanitarians as those you have named. But there is no more reason to suppose that the Reverend Mr. Sunday or his followers could be brought to look up on 'hitting the trail' as comic, than that any one would regard Cardinal Archbishop Mercier's pastoral as a ribald jest—that is, of course, outside the German universities. And please understand that I take religion seriously. That is, when I don't my wife does."

"Pray be assured," I hastened to reply, "that no one takes religion more seriously than I do. Years ago I was a postulate in theology, and although 'dismissed at his own request, and for causes not affecting his moral character,' as the good Bishop put it, your loving colleague still dips into the Fathers occasionally. But in stumbling over the XXXIX Articles he found that the dust of this planet included more systems of religion than ever came out of Judea.

"I will admit there are certain comic as

well as serious aspects to Medicine. On the comedy side I remember numerous certain cures for disease it has been our duty, as newspaper men, to chronicle. Koch's lymph in the Nineties was commended as a means of warding off old age. It is painful to think how many of our friends, now dead, experimented with this injection, guaranteed by the discoverer to restore youth as well as to arrest decay. No one, lately, has announced a panacea, but serums manufactured by vivisectionists are said to prevent or cure half the ills mankind is heir to. Yes, I can see the comic element in Medicine, but is it not overwhelmed by the serious? Do you remember Faust's soliloquy? He tells of the thousands he and his father killed, hoping to cure, during a visitation of the plague. Has not their experience been repeated ten thousand times?"

"But, to me the medical profession is the most serious of all," said my friend. "I underwent an operation last year, as you know, and I have been paying for it ever since. No one, I think, after what I have been through, could possibly regard Medicine as a serio-comic profession."

"Then don't you see, my dear fellow," I said, mildly triumphant, "that by the process of elimination, we have arrived at the profession we both adorn? The Serio-Comic Profession is neither Law, the Church, nor Medicine. It can only be Letters, and that title is big enough and broad enough to cover a multitude of sins, including authorship, hack writing, journalism."

"But, these are all and equally serious, and merely branches of one craft," said my friend, "so that the man or woman who can achieve distinction in one class may hope to do so in all three. I have tried them all, and if the hardest and least remunerative labour on earth is comic, I haven't discovered it."

"It's comic enough, my boy," I retorted, "but the joke is on you, and on the rest of us who are disposed to take ourselves and our craft too seriously. We call ourselves professional men, and our pay and our jobs are those of day-labourers. We give the world the best there is in us, and the world is not ungrateful, is, in fact, quite tolerant of the defects of our qualities. But we let the middleman reap whatever of the reward of our labours comes in money, take what he gives us to live on, and then sit by and wonder what is to become of us in old age, unless the government we criticise but take no part in, borrows the Pension Act from England. To the middleman we are the most comic people on earth, I assure you, as well as the most profitable."

Having proved a title clear, the Socratic method may be abandoned. The purpose of bringing together this little group of essays is to pleasantly enlighten writing folk, especially those of the younger generation, on subjects not usually taught in the classroom, in order that the "Bachelors of Arts in Journalism," of whom some hundreds were in process of incubation in various American universities in 1915, may have no illusions on coming into the keen competition, the

continuous excitement of the noblest and most fascinating calling that ever stimulated a man's brain or starved his body.

I agree with my friend, just quoted, that journalism, hack writing, and authorship, are equally serious branches of the profession of letters, and that they are more or less interchangeable. Milton, Dryden, Defoe, Addison, Steele, Johnson, and Goldsmith, were all hacks, and were not ashamed of it. One feels reasonably sure that if the *London Times* had been published in Milton's time the *Areopagitica* would have appeared in its columns. All these men would have been contributors to the daily press, had there been such a thing. There wasn't, so they wrote pamphlets and broadsides, a class of vehicle for thought which is again coming into favour, or contributed to the weekly press.

From Kipling and Shaw to Maeterlinck and Anatole France, there are few eminent authors these days who have escaped newspaper experience. In the office of the New York newspaper best loved of newspaper men to-day, a list of authors would include half the staff. The President of the Corporation, the Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editor, the City Editor, the Assistant City Editor, the Managing Editor, the Exchange Editor, the Financial Editor, one Editorial Writer, one Sporting Writer, one Copy Reader, the Music Critic, the Dramatic Critic, and at least one reporter, have books to their credit. Of men whose traditions still linger there, the names of William Cullen Bryant, John Bigelow, Carl Schurz, Ed-

win Lawrence Godkin, and the Garrisons, will be familiar to most students of literature.

To instance a single New York morning newspaper, books have been published by the art critic, the music critic, the "col- yum" conductor, a recent dramatic critic, the late proprietor, the London correspondent, and one editorial writer. Karl Marx, Bayard Taylor, and John Hay were once members of its staff.

Most of the hacks employed on big dictionary and encyclopedia jobs in this country have profited by journalistic experience. So have a majority of magazine writers and editors. Those who have failed to obtain such training as a newspaper office affords, regret it, and with reason.

Journalism is the only branch of the profession of Letters in which the aspirant is paid while learning. The easiest way to become a journalist is to collect suburban news for the paper you like best of those printed near your home, and turn it in "on space." I began the easiest way, at \$5 a column, and the first week I cleared thirty-five cents above expenses for meals, carfares, and other incidentals. It did not seem a large sum to me because years before my father had spoiled me by a five-cent-a-word rate for an essay which began, "The Frog Is A Bac- trian Anymule."

A suburban reporter sees, every day, all the officials in his territory, most of the lawyers, the clergy, the physicians, the undertakers, and in course of time learns to report council meetings,

speeches, interviews, sermons, and *what not to write*, until at length he becomes a full-fledged member of the city staff, ceases to be a journalist, and develops into a newspaper man. During these early years he has had more fun and earned more money than any friends of his own age, in any of the other professions. The smaller the community the greater the importance with which his newspaper connection has invested him. Wherever he goes, if he is the right kind, he is on a footing of equality with the people he meets. But he is sure to grow cynical because he sees most of the worst side of life; and suspicious, because he soon discovers that people are really less interested in him than in what he may write about them and their affairs, in a word, what they can get out of him. He is having a post-graduate course in literæ humaniores which will prove invaluable in any of the other professions, and all the time his friends are envying him his abundant leisure, he is working from ten to sixteen hours a day under the severest discipline known outside a barracks or a seminary. But his income has ceased to rise.

At thirty he finds other professional men of the same age outstripping him in the race for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and especially the pursuit of money. What has he to look forward to? One New York editor is said to draw \$75,000 a year salary. But he began life with a competence, with exceptional talent, and in a favourable environment. New York City has sixty-seven daily

papers and hundreds of magazines and trade publications. New York also has at least fifty large hotels and hundreds of small ones, and the same figures hold good as to theatres and moving-picture houses. There are more cooks in New York drawing \$5,000 a year than there are editors. There are more players drawing \$5,000 than there are writers, and the combined budgets of the Police Department and Board of Education in New York exceed the editorial salaries of all the newspapers in the United States, figured on the per capita basis. And even the highest paid editor has less than half the income of the highest paid tenor.

Journalism, as compared with any of the other professions, is distinctly unprofitable, and the term of employment is uncertain. I am writing these words in the editorial rooms of a newspaper where one man has served fifty-four years, beginning as an office boy, where the dramatic critic has completed forty-three years of usefulness, the music critic thirty-one years, and where three men in the mechanical department have exceeded half a century of service. But such a newspaper is exceptional. I have seen three managing editors come and go from the office of one morning paper in less than the same number of years, one after twenty-five years of intelligent and faithful service. I have seen the oldest and the most popular of dramatic critics, six of his successors, and three of his colleagues on other journals dismissed because they failed to curry favor with theatrical managers. There is no

organization among the writers and editors, seemingly no cohesion or esprit de corps.

I have seen the pay of sub-editors in large American cities remain at the level they reached fifteen years ago, while the printers have advanced their compensation three times, and I have read Lord Northcliffe's address to the Chicago Press Club, in which he spoke of these facts with astonishment.

In London, he explained, a sub-editor could only be dismissed on two months' notice, whereas an editorial writer would require six months, and an important executive, a year. Salaries, he explained, were adjusted between the proprietor and the editorial employees by an organisation to which all newspaper men belonged, and which regulated such matters without friction, and at a higher rate of compensation than was paid either in Chicago or New York.

Hack work, where continuous employment is still more uncertain, is in most cases paid less than bricklaying. The best rate of pay about equals that of a structural iron worker, but for steady work on a long job the hack will often agree to work at the rate of \$1 an hour.

There remain to be considered the emoluments of authorship. Harper & Bros. advertised during Mark Twain's lifetime that they paid him \$1 a word on all the "copy" he could furnish, and that this was the highest rate of pay on record. The publisher of a popular woman novelist told me some years ago that he had paid her \$38,000 in royalties on the first six

months' sale of one of her "best sellers." I happen to know that when he was Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tom Reed received \$5,000 for signing his name to a preface he had not written which was to precede a set of books he had not seen, but which bore his name as editor-in-chief. That, I believe, to be the highest rate ever paid for literary work in America.

The successful novelist, and especially the successful playwright, if shrewd in business matters, may command large prices. But they are rare birds, as rare as black swans. Two publications have advertised a minimum rate of five cents a word for fiction, but the minimum rate of many fiction magazines is only \$10 per 1,000, which is less than the double space rate almost any New York newspaper will pay for an exclusive news story. When it comes to writing books, profits rise from nothing at all to an average of a few hundred dollars. One man of genuine ability, and of international reputation, as some of his works are selling in Europe, told me he had published ten volumes, his average profit on each being \$200.

The comic side, then, of this profession we all love and take too seriously, would seem to be our inability to get a fair share of the price the public gladly pays for our work. And yet if it be good work, it is priceless. Well did the good old Roman say: "I have built up for myself a monument more lasting than brass, more regal than the pyramids." Still, the poor devil was frequently in trouble with his publishers, the Sosii, and never satisfied

with his pay. If one had a talent for mathematics, and trustworthy data were obtainable, it would be interesting to figure out just what a set of verses to Lydia would have earned to date on the basis of royalty at ten per cent. Would not the total exceed the fortune Mæcenas so wisely administered?

BOSS LORD'S OPINIONS

"Sun" Veteran Talks Journalism, Past, Present, and Future.

As a rule no one hears a good word about Bosses who have retired. The evil they have done is poignantly remembered; the good, if any, is reserved for editorial discussion after their obituaries have been published. This is a story about and by a Boss who is the exception. From 1880 to 1913 he ruled with undisputed power, but if he did evil, *Park Row* failed to hear of it, although *Park Row* quickly hears all the evil that happens in the world, and some that doesn't; and with him "Boss" resumed its original significance, becoming a title of affectionate familiarity instead of a term of reproach. Newspaper men and women who have read thus far need not be told that this Boss was Chester Sanders Lord, for forty-three years a member of the *Sun's* staff, and within the period already named its managing editor. Others will be interested in learning something of the life-work of a man who speaks with authority of journalistic conditions past and present, and who records in these pages

his hopes and fears for his profession and gives the newspaperman's ideal of the newspaper of the future.

Mr. Lord's father was the Rev. Edward Lord, a Presbyterian clergyman, who was chaplain of the 110th Regiment of New York Volunteers during the Civil War. Born in Romulus, N. Y., March 18, 1850, the future Boss entered Hamilton College as a student at the age of nineteen, and two years later became associate editor of the Oswego *Advertiser*. In 1872, he joined the staff of the New York *Sun*, becoming one of Mr. Dana's original "bright young men" at a time when that great editor habitually gave much of his leisure to training the younger writers on his paper, often taking them to his home for week-end visits that he might learn their individual tastes and direct their studies and ambitions. Quick to win and hold Mr. Dana's confidence, Mr. Lord, who had begun work as a reporter, was made managing editor December 3, 1880, and for seventeen years thereafter and until Mr. Dana's death, was his right-hand man. The training received from Dana he passed on to the younger men on the staff, so that before the profession received recognition from the universities the *Sun* became widely known as a "School of Journalism," and its graduates, the men who had been tempted away by offers from magazines or other newspapers, proud of their obligation, formed a "Sun Alumni Association." These *Sun* graduates joined with the regular members of the staff in celebrat-

ing Boss Lord's twenty-fifth anniversary as managing editor, gave him a breakfast at Delmonico's, a loving cup, and told him what they thought of him, plainly, emphatically.

William M. Laffan, then chief owner of the newspaper, said: "There never was a more valuable man in the newspaper business, from my point of view, than Mr. Lord. It is a supreme satisfaction to be able to go away with the realization that he is in charge."

E. P. Mitchell, long editor of the *Sun*, said in his tribute to the paper's executive: "Every night of his ten thousand nights of service has been a Trafalgar or a Waterloo. He has fought ten thousand battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil: the woman applicant, the refractory citizen, the liar at the other end of the wire, and the ten thousand demons which make up the great army of nervous prostration."

The popularity of the Boss with his staff was explained by William J. Henderson, the music critic who said: "I have served under managing editors and mismanaging editors, and I have never seen an office in which there was so little friction as in the *Sun's*. To my mind the best work Mr. Lord does is to make a home for his men where the good go straight to the front and the poor are restrained and corrected by gentle and kindly suggestion."

On his retirement as managing editor, Mr. Lord said to the *Evening Post*; "For a number of years I have been anxious to relinquish newspaper work. The du-

ties of managing editor of a big New York newspaper demand unremitting alert attention all day and far into the night, and I feel that I have had my share of them in the thirty-two years I have held the place.

"I have participated actively in eleven Presidential campaigns, beginning with that of 1872, in which I reported the campaign speeches of Horace Greeley. I am going, despite the protests of all my associates here, for the sole reason that I want to relinquish some of my activities."

More than a year later some newspapermen were discussing the evolution of journalism, the prophecies for its future uttered by the venerable editor of the London *Telegraph*, Lord Burnham, and the radical differences between the press of Europe and America in general. The passing of the personal element in newspaper work seemed most striking to one man, the increase in the bulk of the newspapers in this country to another, the standardization in both news and features to a third. John Palmer Gavit said:

"Personality counts for just as much as it ever did. There must be always a directing force, and this force, now practically unknown to the readers of newspapers, may operate without being generally felt, even in the offices of publication.

"Take the *Sun* as an example. As a newspaper or as a business enterprise the *Sun* may be greater to-day than ever in its history, but not as an institution, as the ideal journal of the average newspaperman. I once believed with most people

that the *Sun* of by-gone years was the sole creation of Mr. Dana. Mr. Dana passed away, and the paper went on as before. Thereafter I felt sure the personality directing the publication must be that of Mr. Laffan. Mr. Laffan's death made no change in the *Sun*. Evidently, I thought, the real directing force is the editor, but when the managing editor retired we were all made to realize the personality was that of Boss Lord. The trouble with us all is we are so bound to the task of the day in matters relating to our own profession we sometimes lack perspective."

"Then let us get Mr. Lord to talk to us about newspapers," one of the men said, "for he possesses wide knowledge as well as personality, and has had time to acquire perspective."

But interviewing Mr. Lord in retirement proved a more difficult task than selling stories to him when he was Boss. He was in splendid health, and as good natured as usual, but professed to be more interested in golf than in newspapers. He said he had been too busy to play during the greater part of his life, and was just beginning to realize what he had missed. Moreover, having declined invitations to write books or magazine articles on various phases of journalism, he couldn't see what fun there would be in submitting to an interview.

His interest, however, is dormant rather than dead. He showed a set of the files of his newspapers, which occupied the entire side wall of a little annex to his library, and had just come from a binder.

They began in sizes about equal to volumes of the *Nation*, and grew in bulk until the familiar form of the *Sun* of to-day was disclosed. The first paper in the first volume was the first Mr. Lord "put to bed" as managing editor, and the last edition in the latest volume recorded his resignation. After thinking over the proposed interview, which he was good enough to take as a compliment, Mr. Lord agreed to answer any questions relating to journalism that might be asked, the questions to be submitted in, and replied to, in writing. Here is the result:

What was the standard, the ideal, the ethical code, if you will, by which you guided the destinies of the New York "Sun" during your long service as its managing editor?

I do not recall that there was any. Certainly none was communicated to the staff. If anybody erred he was reproved. Instruction or direction by maxlm or by precept is instruction in the obvious and we avoided the obvious. There were no codes of ethics or profound theories or mysterious policies or editorial councils. Not an index expurgatorius or a catalogue of "don'ts," not even a style card was pasted on the walls any more than were the Ten Commandments or Thomas Jefferson's ten rules of life. I do not know why we avoided the rules habit; probably because we started that way and never reformed. You see, in the first eighteen years of Mr. Dana's editorship it was a four-page newspaper and critical supervision of every paragraph was possible. Moreover, there being no early

newspaper trains, we began printing at four o'clock instead of at one, as now, and had three more hours for preparation and revision. Less necessity for rules and regulations existed, whereas present-day editions five or six times as large prepared in much shorter time compel organisation and discipline. We did seek a standard of literary excellence. Verbal tediousness was hooted out of the place. A nicety of literary expression was encouraged, as was that quality that some one has called "the art of producing rich effects by familiar words." Mr. Dana was responsible for the *Sun's* literary excellence. He loved literature. He appreciated and praised good writing and he inspired the staff to enthusiasm for it.

I know, of course, that in your early years in journalism, newspapers were largely the expression of one man's personality. This was true of the "Sun" under Dana, of the "Times" under Raymond, of the "Herald" under Bennett. I think it was true in more recent times of the "World" until, or perhaps after, Mr. Pulitzer became blind. But it has seemed to me that in the last few years the personality of the directing genius has been obscured. The average newspaper reader of to-day knows nothing of the men whose opinions he reads, and can identify by name only the owners of the journals. Are the actual heads of newspapers to-day men of less force than their predecessors, or is this difference due to the repressive influences of the corporations by which most newspapers are owned?

The reputations of the group of editors

so well known fifty years ago arose chiefly because of their very great ability as newspaper men; nevertheless, it must be conceded that circumstances also played a conspicuous part. The present generation little appreciates how our Civil War took hold of the people and how earnestly and how violently public opinion was expressed. Men quarrelled with a bitterness otherwise unknown in American politics. The war Republicans or Unionists were for fighting the war to a finish at any cost of life or property. The peace Democrats or Copperheads wanted the war stopped then and there on any terms. The peace Republicans sought to stop the fighting and talk it over to a settlement. The war Democrats, while disposed to continue the contest, were angry critics of the conduct of the war and of the Lincoln Administration. The newspapers fought each other with savage ferocity, and the editors, inspired by the magnitude and the importance of events, involving as they honestly believed the very life of the republic, were stimulated to the very limit of mental exaltation. It was thus that Greeley, Raymond, Marble, Curtis, Brooks, Bennett, Bryant, Bowles, Watterson, and others became known as public champions. They were made conspicuous by the very greatness of the events that inspired their minds and their pens. They had their cause just. The European war is just now arousing thought, but otherwise we must admit that present-day occurrences have not furnished the mental inspiration that marked the great events

of fifty years ago. The new freedom of 1914, unlike that of 1862, was born without agony or anguish in twilight sleep—and neither its parent nor the public yet knows whether it was born alive or dead.

Nor was it alone by their editorship that these great editors were known. Greeley was a popular lecturer on temperance, agriculture, and the abolition of slavery. Raymond was active in politics, having been Lieutenant-Governor of the State and a party leader. George William Curtis was better known perhaps as a lecturer than an editor. Bryant was known as a poet wherever poetry was read. Dana had been managing editor of the *Tribune* for ten years, and he was Assistant Secretary of War during half of the great struggle. He was already a conspicuous public man when he bought the *Sun*. The elder Bennett's reputation rested quite as much on his business ability, his ownership of the *Herald*, as on editorship. He attracted attention, to be sure, by his audacious attacks on public men and on members of society, but he was also an advertising genius. He was the first to develop the use of the small advertisement. He invented methods of news-getting. He used the pioneer Atlantic Cable freely, and thereby gained reputation for having "the best foreign news," a reputation that has lived to this day, although not for twenty years has the *Herald* had any better foreign news than several other newspapers.

Moreover, fifty years ago, the literary impulse was a conspicuous factor in pub-

lic thought. It was inspired by the literary exaltation of the Victorian era. The editors were lovers of literature, students of literature, writers of literature, and they constantly urged their staffs to increased literary efforts. Marble, Raymond, Dana, Bryant, Curtis, and others made reputations for literary excellence in journalistic work that would not to-day attract so much attention, for literary excellence, while commended, is not so much insisted on, encouraged or taught in newspaper offices, as it was forty years ago.

But we must not suppose for an instant that our best editors of to-day are not in every respect equal to those of fifty years ago. The old-time editors attracted attention for reasons I have mentioned and also because it was the practice to exploit them by name—a thing not now done. Even the newspapers themselves were known by the names of the men at their head. It was "Greeley's *Tribune*" and "Bennett's *Herald*" and "Dana's *Sun*," and so on. They were good advertisers of themselves, and, then as now, a good thing well advertised got reputation and recognition. To-day, for whatever reason I know not, the names of editors-in-chief and managing editors are excluded from the newspapers with an unanimity that seems born of intention. Their work is anonymous. Other contributors are exploited. The writers of special articles for the Sunday editions, the dramatic and the musical critics, some of the book reviewers, the war correspondents, even the writers

of baseball games and prize fights and the elucidators of bridge, whist, and draw poker, are permitted to put their names at the head of their articles. Not so the editors, although they are doing the best newspaper work ever done. For there can be no comparison in general excellence between the newspaper of to-day and the newspaper of any other period. The editorial articles of fifty years ago may have been written with greater literary finish, but with that quality all super-excellence ends. The unlimited size of present-day editions permits of the broadest consideration of important events and of a vastly greater number of topics. Methods of news-gathering have been improved and systematized, and there are far greater facilities for gathering information. The staffs are much larger and incomparably better organized. Probably eight times as much money is spent on the preparation of the edition. The expository editorial article has largely taken the place of the argumentative and the vituperative product, and much more fairness and honesty prevail in the treatment of the politics of the day. All opinions are reserved for the editorial page. Raw reporters are not permitted to spread their comments through the news columns as was their wont in former times.

When you retired from active newspaper work, I had been reading your paper twenty-five years. I confess to you that for many of those years there was but one other newspaper in the world I liked as well—"Figaro"—and even then I

realized that a "Figaro" in New York or London was impossible. But the ideal newspaper is an ever-recurring topic. I have seen poor old Dr. Perry listen patiently to the long discussions on this subject in the early morning hours. I have heard it talked about during lulls at the copy desk. I know that it has never existed, that it does not exist now, for the reason that there is never time to make a journal a thing of perfection, but I should like to hear from you something of the great newspaper of the future. Will it be "blanket sheet" or "tabloid" in size? Will the news be classified as in the old days, by departments, as sporting and financial news still is, or will crazy-quilt "makeups" continue. Will there be an editorial page? Will police news, divorce-court proceedings, campaign personalities, and the press agent be eliminated?

Likely enough, you enjoyed *Figaro* because it minimized routine news and sought topics of national importance or of literary excellence only. The Paris newspapers have larger circulations in proportion to population than those of any other city. They differ from editions in other cities in that they make ordinary news incidental and have not editorial pages in the sense that we have them. Some of them inject editorial opinions in all parts of the sheet, carrying a running comment through a news article. They might perhaps be called little daily magazines. Some of them are political sheets only; others treat almost exclusively of literary topics. Not any of

them tries to print what we call "a complete newspaper," tries to print something about everything in sight, as present-day American newspapers are attempting to do. It may be you liked the *Sun* of 1890 for similar reasons. It had an editorial page unprofaned by routine or any other kind of news—for Mr. Dana wanted the news printed elsewhere—a page given over to discussion and to literary articles, embellished with all sorts of odd and interesting things that blew in from anywhere. Its news columns exalted the highly important. They were not so keen for "The Stiletto in Stanton Street" or "the Bludgeon on the Bowery," or minor news events, unless those events contained something queer, strange, or unique. In a recent address Dr. Talcott Williams, dean of the Pulitzer School of Journalism, praised the *Sun* of about that time for originating the short story in daily journalism; but the story was a news story of fact embellished like a story of fiction. Nevertheless, the *Sun* of twenty or thirty years ago could not be popular to-day. It was incomplete, save as to its editorial page. It gave about ten columns only to all the news of the day, including the financial and commercial markets, the shipping, and the real estate, whereas the morning newspapers of to-day give sixty or seventy columns to this kind of matter.

Your yearning for the ideal newspaper is not likely to be satisfied. The ideal or the complete newspaper is unattainable. You could not find ten readers to agree as to what constitutes newspaper

superiority. The lawyer wants extensive reports of court proceedings, the text of judicial decisions, and the court calendar in full—without these his newspaper is incomplete. The real-estate man wants recorded the sale of every inch of ground and every building, as well as every mortgage lien and satisfaction of mortgage—and so on, everybody demanding completion of detail of the things that interest him personally or affect his business. The theatrical and musical people, the department-store managers, the art folks, the thousands who speculate in stocks or commodities, the politicians, the charity institutions, the women and men of society, the promoters of education, the reform associations, and the vast multitude engrossed in baseball and other sports, they all want to read about their own affairs, and they care mighty little about the affairs of the others. The newspaper that approaches the ideal or approaches completion must please all these elements, and it is the attempt to please everybody by printing something about everything that has so enormously enlarged our sheets. The old-fashioned newspaper sought to make every article interesting to everybody. Present-day policy is to give large attention and generous space to everybody's interests and everybody's doings. We record the transfer of a policeman, the granting of a vacation to a fireman, the name of every person found eligible to teach in the public schools, every little detail affecting every city employee. We print pages of court calendars and real-estate trans-

fers, the arrival and departure of every boat, however small, as well as column on column of market reports.

This tendency toward expansion seems likely to continue rather than to languish, and it seems safe to predict yet larger-sized newspapers. This policy, greatly assisted by its reduction in price, has carried the *Times* to its present conspicuous success. No other newspaper has so consistently endeavoured to please so many varied interests even at the expense to itself of so many dreary columns—for its management must know, as every newspaper man knows, that routine news is mighty uninteresting stuff. Nevertheless, if anything approaching newspaper perfection is to be achieved in this direction, yet greater expansion must precede it. The news will have to be classified yet more carefully, additional departments must be created, editorial forces enlarged, and much more money spent in preparing editions. That the general tendency is toward expansion is attested by its general adoption not only in New York, but in all American cities, for almost all daily newspapers of any account have increased fivefold or more in size in the last twenty years.

An obvious result of continuing this expansion must be to lessen the number of newspapers, for the very great expense involved threatens the weaker sheets and prohibits the establishment of new ones. At the moment the seven morning newspapers in this town are imitating each other. They are printing the same news collected from the same sources and in

nearly the same newspaper vocabulary. They differ little except in editorial-page utterances; and on the greater public questions there is little disagreement there. Latterly, practically all of them have favoured some sort of tariff change, favoured the Currency bill, opposed the Shipping bill, opposed the election of Whitman, opposed Roosevelt, opposed Tammany. By what exaltation of the imagination can we picture the starting of another newspaper in imitation of these seven sheets?

Of course, it is possible that some time somebody with nuggets and nerve may start the other kind of a newspaper—four, six, never exceeding eight pages in size; imitating some of the pleasing features of the Paris sheets; giving three columns instead of three pages to the routine reports of the war, but omitting no important fact; discarding all matter not interesting or of national importance; counting it mighty big news that is worth more than half a column; trying to make every article interesting to every reader; making it typographically easy to read and distinctive in appearance; letting it be merry with the merrymakers, cheerful, joyous, and wholesome, and with an editorial page fair and just and interesting. It is just possible that such a newspaper might succeed. Obviously the next new newspaper to succeed must be something entirely different from the newspaper of to-day.

The size, shape, and typographical appearance of newspapers are matters of personal preference. The eight-column

sheet just now popular seems as practical as any yet used—only I wish they would paste the pages together as the *Evening Post* does. First thought should be to make the newspaper easy to read, and that thought should influence the arrangement of headlines and typographical appearance quite as much as fix the size. It is easier to turn over a few pages than many; easier to scan the articles on one large page than on two small ones. The Sunday supplements of smaller-sized pages, just now coming into use, are distinctly hard to handle unless pasted—and they are not—for the pages are all over the floor ere reading is fairly begun.

And the same motto, "Make it easy to read," with the addition "easy to understand," applies yet more forcibly to the reading matter itself. The other day a morning paper in a London cable said: "Wheat sold at 60 shillings a quarter in the corn market to-day." That sentence gave the mind of the reader a jolt and a pause in the attempt to translate shillings and quarters into cents and bushels. Few American readers are familiar with foreign languages, hence all words, as well as quotations, in the French or the German or other tongues should be made into English. Pounds, marks, and francs should be computed into dollars and cents. And who knows where in this State the Thirty-fifth Congress District is? Why not call it the Syracuse district? Or who can tell where in this city the Sixteenth Precinct police station may be? Why not identify it as the Mercer Street station? I appreciate that all this is what the teach-

ers of journalism must call "elementary," nevertheless it is attention to hundreds of just such small details that makes the newspaper easy to read and easy to understand.

It has been said that a great event like the present European war changes the character of the newspapers as well as it changes the people. Has anything of the sort come under your observation?

I am mindful of very great changes in public thought, and in newspaper expression of that thought. The most alert mental acrobats of newspaperdom are the makers of the Sunday supplements and the Saturday evening special pages. Naught that is new in metropolitan life escapes these alert gentlemen. Public thought and public talk are reflected in their columns quicker than anywhere else. They exploit with marvellous celerity every discovery in science, in medicine, in mechanism—every triumph of surgery, of art, of literature—every great personal achievement of man or woman. Not anywhere else are the signs of the times so quickly and so accurately reflected. In the winter one year ago they were alive to social and moral conditions. It did not escape their notice that the few remaining old-fashioned mothers and the church were denouncing the new dances as sensual and demoralizing, and that these same mothers and this same church proclaimed against the dress of our wives and our daughters as being immoral and indecent. Our theatres were producing sex plays, in which details leading toward vice were

presented with allurement and suggestion; and some of our moving-picture shows were actually closed by the police. Comment demonstrated that the novels most read were those on the everlasting sex question, and that sex relations were described and discussed with a freedom that would not have been tolerated fifty years ago. The white-slave agitation was conspicuous, and marriage and divorce were under free discussion.

These things are not uppermost this year. The same conditions exist, but they are taken for granted. We are thinking and reading and writing of something more serious. The energy of newspaper effort is directed toward the European conflict of armies.

I have read constantly and with very great attention the American newspaper presentation of this war—and with supreme pride in that newspaper achievement. Almost every day we hear the sneering remark, "You cannot believe anything the newspapers say about the war." To which I reply: You can believe almost everything they say in their news columns, and you may read their comments and inferences with assurance that they have not falsified facts in reaching conclusions. It has been difficult to obtain quick reports of military movements or of battles, for the reason that correspondents have not been permitted to accompany the armies, and censors have over-censored all information; yet, reviewing the months of conflict, we fail to recall any serious misrepresentation of facts or conditions. We understand

with substantial accuracy how many men each Power has in the field, where the armies are gathered, what the losses have been, the reserve resources in men, munitions, and money; also, just what advantage has been gained and lost. Our newspapers have spared neither effort nor expense. They present the news from each national capital with equal impartiality, printing every official report exactly as it is given out. In presentation of the causes of the war and of responsibilities for the declarations of war, the American newspapers have exhausted almost every resource for obtaining the intelligent opinions of eminent statesmen, learned jurists, distinguished authors and writers, educators, cabinet ministers—the best minds representing all the nations in conflict. The spirit of fairness was never more manifestly attested than in the throwing open of newspaper columns in indefinite number to anybody of any account who had anything to say for any nation. I do not recall any stupendous event, either within memory or in history, that has been so voluminously, so fairly, so honestly recorded.

And we may be sure that this war will bring other great changes to newspapers and to the people. Never has been recorded such destruction of sentiment, such destruction of principle, of honesty, of civilization, of property, or such havoc of human life. Throughout Europe all progress has ceased. The great universities are virtually closed, that the students may go forth to kill each other.

Artists, authors, musicians, teachers, skilled artisans, professional men—men who make for the upbuilding of intellectual life and for the refinement of social life, men who represent what perhaps was the highest civilization ever known—the very best men in England, France, and Germany are killing each other by the hundreds of thousands. In what condition of mind is the world to emerge from this awful destruction? What sort of an era is to follow the return of peace?

I believe that the newspapers will largely influence this change. They give us our first impressions of great events, and first impressions are likely to be lasting. They reach the people to an extent not approached by any other influence, for everybody of any account reads them. Almost every farmer now takes a daily newspaper at trifling cost more than he once paid for his weekly; and in the cities the daily newspaper goes into nearly every home. The circulation of newspapers has increased enormously of recent years, largely in consequence of the reduction in price, for throughout the entire country almost all sell for one cent a copy. This great increase is obviously among persons of moderate means. More than ever before the newspaper reaches a vast number of persons who do not by habit think over much, but who in a way let the newspaper editors think for them, and who involuntarily accept the newspapers' views on current topics. It has been conceded these many years that the printed word

has far greater influence than the spoken word, and it has been recognized, also, that almost everything we read has its direct or its unconscious influence.

And I perceive very great encouragement and very great promise for the educational progress of our whole country in the vast improvement in late years in the newspapers of our lesser-sized cities. News-gathering has become systematized until it is reduced almost to routine. The telephone has brought happenings 500 miles away within reach of the reporter's ear. The modern printing press admits of the printing of an indefinite number of pages in any edition. Type-setting machines have increased the compositor's product hourly six or eight fold. Railroad schedules are arranged to facilitate newspaper circulation. Newspapers in our smaller cities, by utilizing this modern progress, are producing editions that may truthfully be said to approach in general excellence as well as in size the newspapers of the big cities. In editorial-page ability and in news collection and arrangement the Hartford *Courant* and the Springfield *Republican* compare most favourably with their New York contemporaries. There is nothing in Boston much better than the *Providence Journal*. The Utica *Press* is of exceeding excellence in every column, and it has the genuine metropolitan flavor. The Syracuse *Post-Standard* compares very favourably with any newspaper printed anywhere. In Rochester the *Chronicle* and the *Herald* and the *Express* are splendid specimens of newspa-

per-making. And we might continue thus across the Continent, enumerating scores of daily newspapers of supreme merit, some of those printed in Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Louisville, and Cincinnati being in the very front rank. These newspapers printed in cities of third and fourth size have led all others lately in proportionate improvement.

One of my colleagues, a man who has faithfully served the same newspaper as editor and critic more than forty years, said to me the other day that his ideal newspaper could only be achieved by an endowment of \$5,000,000. He believed it would be possible on the income of that sum to publish a small journal, say of the size of the "Sun" twenty-five years ago, which would be wholly free from any of the objections he finds to the average newspaper of to-day—free from political influence, advertising patronage; independent in all things. He thought such a publication would eventually become self-supporting, but that, without an income of, say, \$250,000 a year assured, it must fall by the wayside. I confess to holding that whatever is worth reading the public will pay for, and that I see nothing irreconcilable in the adaptation of the newspaper as a business enterprise to loftier ideals. I know there are newspapers now with lofty ideals. Will it ever, in your opinion, be necessary that a newspaper have an endowment to hold the respect of its readers? Is there not, on the other hand, reason to fear that a newspaper that needed an endowment would need readers still worse?

This golden dream of the ideal endowed newspaper has disturbed many an editor's slumber. It is not well founded. It assumes that in mysterious existence somewhere are men who, for fabulous compensation, could create better newspapers than now exist, write better articles, criticise more intelligently, get more important information. But where indeed are these geniuses to be found? To-day's newspapers would be equally glad to shower them with gold—do shower with gold statesmen, clergymen, artists, novelists, captains of industry, any one who can transfer the genius of his intellect to the printed page. To-day's newspapers employ the very best writers to be found. Nearly a score of our most popular novelists have contributed to the newspaper literature of the war. The men contributing war history and description to the magazines, the men who are writing the books on the war, are the very men who went to the front for the daily newspapers. It was equally true of the Spanish-American War. The daily newspaper correspondents became the magazine article writers and the historians of the conflict. The newspapers spare not money when results are sought. The endowed newspaper of unlimited means might indeed compete with them, but it is doubtful whether it could excel, especially if conducted under present-day newspaper methods. If made entirely different from the seven morning newspapers now so nearly alike it might succeed.

To the thought of an endowed news-

paper of supreme excellence is attached usually the notion of selling it for five or ten cents a copy. People will pay more for a really superior article, reasons the dreamer—the journal of "loftier ideals" will command readers of such advanced intelligence that price will not be considered. Yet the history of newspapers, and of all published literature, for that matter, proves to the contrary. Almost without exception the high-priced newspapers and the higher-priced magazines are those of lesser circulation. Nor does there seem to be any special clamour on the part of the public for "loftier ideals" in journalism, if we may judge from the practical test of circulation; for sheets of cheapest literary quality and most slovenly moral expression and most fantastic typography, in Paris and in London, as well as in America, sell in far greater numbers than any others—and he is an honest editor indeed who resists the temptation to imitate them.

Oswald Garrison Villard at the newspaper conference at Lawrence, Kan., noted some of the chief complaints of the public against the newspapers of to-day. I present them to you, as he stated them, purposely omitting his comments, in order to ask you what measures will be taken in the newspaper of the future to make such complaints not merely unjustifiable, but impossible:

- (1.) *The persistent refusal to right a wrong done editorially.*
- (2.) *The suppression of news for profit, or because of fear of some powerful interest.*

(3.) *The laying of false emphasis upon the news because of criminal or unworthy motives.*

(4.) *An amazing and often criminal lack of accuracy in reporting.*

(5.) *Indefensible attacks upon public men coupled with shocking invasion of privacy of both public and private individuals from which not even women are exempt.*

(6.) *Deliberate falsification of news and facts.*

(1.) Almost all newspapers are honest. It is the dishonest newspaper only that refuses to make right an obvious wrong. The editor who deliberately falsifies can hardly be expected to eat his own words. The public that knows him to be falsifying and complains of that falsification might find its remedy in purchasing the product of an honest editor.

(2.) Very little suppression of real news for profit or for any other reason ever came under my observation, and I believe that very little of it exists. The man who worms out social or business secrets and offers to suppress them for a price is a blackmailer and a criminal and he should be sent to jail.

(3.) This practice exists among dishonest editors only, and it is not common. There are a few dishonest editors, I am sorry to say, just as there are a few dishonest lawyers and physicians and plumbers, but all editors should not be judged by the dishonesty of a few any more than all bank cashiers should be judged by the one cashier who steals, or all clergymen by the one clergyman who goes astray. The American newspapers, with very few exceptions, do not

falsify or suppress or pervert news.

(4.) Whatever conditions of this sort exist are in consequence of the employment of cheap inexperienced reporters, or inattention or lack of supervision or of general indifference by the office staff. Inaccurate reporting is absolutely inexcusable and unpardonable, and it should not be tolerated—is not tolerated in well-managed offices. Nevertheless, eternal vigil is required to prevent it. The combination of a self-opinionated, careless young reporter and a sleepy copy-reader may create all kinds of havoc of fact.

(5.) This sort of villainy is gradually disappearing—is curing itself. Very much less of it exists. There is much less virulent attack on public men, less political misrepresentation, less unfairness towards political rivals. It has been a question always whether excessive vituperation and venomous attack have as much influence with the public as temperate reasoning and the expression of righteous conclusions; and present-day tendency is decidedly towards moderation. Growing sentiment against the invasion of private life and the home is plainly to be seen. Public opinion is largely influential in this change, for the newspapers are quick to catch the public will. The late Whitelaw Reid once said, in truth: "The thing always forgotten by the closest critics of newspapers is that the newspapers must be measurably what their readers make them, what their constituents call for and sustain."

(6.) Deliberate falsification of news and of facts does not exist in sufficient abun-

dance to call for consideration. Such falsification is so easily refuted and exposed that even dishonest editors rarely resort to it.

One of the products of the evolution of journalism in the last twenty-five years, one in which you have no share that I am aware of, but of which I know you have been a keen observer, is what, for lack of a better name, we will call Yellow Journalism. If circulation means power it cannot be denied that these newspapers are powerful, but frankly, is their power chiefly exercised for good or for evil?

The exaggeration or hysteria of the sensational newspaper may not be of immediate harm to the young person who reads it casually. But suppose she acquires the habit of reading it every day. Because of her employment or her environment she has not time or opportunity to read anything else. It becomes her mental nourishment. She comes to think and to talk in its exaggerated, inflamed, feverish language. Its typographical breathless announcements startle her—fill her with feverish emotions. She becomes a pessimist, for in the sensational sheet the good and the true and the normal are ignored. "Virtue go hang; vice is the thing that attracts attention," is the motto, and the maiden is fed on the abnormal, the unusual, on mental monstrosities, on exaggerations and fancies. Some one said recently that ten years of cheap reading had changed the British from the most stolid nation of Europe to the most hysterical and theatrical. Everybody is influenced by

what they read, young people especially, and habitual cheap reading must of necessity produce cheap thinking and cheap expression of thought, and consequently cheap moral conduct. It is in this direction that the sensational press and the cheap literature of the day have their chief influence. Cheap literature produces cheap mentality, and consequently a cheap people.

It is a curious fact that following the recent years' outburst of sensational journalism, sensational magazine writing, and sensational novel printing has come something of a change in the people. Many persons believe that the church is losing influence; that the clergy is hesitating and stricken with mental indecision; that morality is less rigid. Others profess to think that the theatres no longer inspire or instruct, that the old-fashioned moral drama is succeeded by moving-picture shows, by illuminations, by unholy dancing, weavings, posturings, and spectacles that appeal to the vision rather than to the intellect. Study clubs have been turned into bridge-whist parties, and afternoon teas into tango tangles. The time-honoured dinner party, that clearing house of society, that regulator of refinement, is rushed and reduced that all may hurry to the dancing floor. The after-theatre supper, once sought and enjoyed among quiet and dainty surroundings, is now gormandized in a blaze of electricity on the fringe of a dancing floor by breathless perspiring people who drop fork and spoon with a clatter when the music resumes and embrace each

other in the fox-trot, the clothes-pin clinch, the crab crawl, the pelican pause, the squab squeeze, or any other step that under any other name would lose none of its sensual sweetness. Col. Ed. James used to tell of a procession up in St. Lawrence County in celebration of a new schoolhouse, in which one transparency read "Education done it." Can it be said of these present-day influences that "Cheap reading influenced them"?

Truth is, the people want sensational news and sensational articles, and this is attested by the large circulations of the saffron sheets. But it is an encouraging sign of the times that the lurid press is toning down; that the sensationalism of the worst offenders is becoming more apparent in the typographical effect of headlines than in the reading matter under them—for the news reading matter is pretty much the same nowadays in all newspapers. The rewrite men have not entirely ceased their activities or their embellishments, but they are more consistently sticking to the truth, are not distorting in spectacular language as was their way ten or fifteen years ago. It is the headline architect who is now conducting the big business of the sensational press.

And what of the future? Are newspapers to be better or worse, more influential or less so?

I anticipate and I predict yet greater excellence, influence, and circulation for our newspapers. They are already taking the place of many kinds of literature. The Saturday evening editions and

the Sunday literary supplements print new fiction by the popular authors. They exploit and expand the latest developments in science, art, music, medicine, mechanics, construction, transportation—indeed, everything that is new or important. They employ the best technical writers, the best descriptive writers, the best specialists, the best writers of fiction. They include all important topics treated by the magazines and other periodical literature. They almost instantly transfer to their columns the important information contained in new books. Our best newspapers are quite as well written as are the magazines and the books. It is useless to say they are not, for their more ambitious and influential articles are prepared with pains-taking care and largely by the same persons who are contributing to the magazines and are writing the books.

I can see that this latter-day newspaper development is likely to increase, rather than diminish, with the result that the public will read little else than the newspapers; indeed, the reading of newspapers is even now beyond all comparison with the reading of any other publications. The new book of which fifty thousand copies are sold is called very successful, of which one hundred thousand are sold is called a wonder, of which two hundred thousand are sold phenomenal. Yet a million and a half newspapers are printed in this city every morning, and nearly two millions every afternoon, and nearly three millions every Sunday. In America millions of per-

sons who do not read more than five or ten books a year read two or three newspapers every day.

Even as years of experience and study and labourious, patient application have solidified and perfected the practice of the law and of medicine, have made firm and substantial the developments of electricity and mechanics, and have solved the problems of transportation and great business, so the making of newspapers is settling down to a strong substantial practical basis. In all seriousness I believe that the Saturday and Sunday newspapers are supplanting other literature, and will continue to do so yet the more, and I foresee a Golden Age of the American newspaper, founded on honesty of utterance and common-sense of conduct, and sustained and encouraged by the confidence and the good will of the people.

HUMAN INTEREST REAL

But in Defining It, Many Great Authorities Differ.

Human Interest! There. That is the way the editor of *Leslie's* begins his editorials. I've always wanted to try it myself, but the people who buy paragraphs seem to think Sleicher has a vested right in the exclamation point. Having put it over for the first time, let us digress briefly, after the fashion of Uncle Toby's nephew Tristram.

Once upon a time, as the story books say, many years before Alexander Hamilton drew up the articles of the first New Jersey corporation, long before life insurance, copper, and Standard Oil furnished material for muckrakers, or people began devoting themselves to various kinds of "uplift," a band of forty men who might have become Captains of Industry had their promising careers suddenly terminated by a woman. She found them, one by one, in a tight place, cornered the oil market, brought that necessary commodity to the boiling point, and a few moments later it was all over. They hadn't even time to endow a few universities. Their misfortune may be

traced directly to the fact that a middle-aged business man, whose mind was probably occupied with the latest ticker quotations from the Produce Exchange, could not remember to say "Open Sesame" at the right moment. Corn, wheat, barley, all had been active that day, and there had been practically no trading in sesame, yet that momentary forgetfulness resulted in his ruin and death, and eventually brought the same fate upon the forty promising young business men he had sought to despoil. All his industrials and certificates, and all the stocks, bonds, and gilt-edged securities of the forty, went to Ali Baba, who was in no way distinguished above his neighbours, except that he did not forget to say "Open Sesame," and to say it at the right time.

Similar forgetfulness of an individual has influenced the progress of the race at various times, nay, has even had its effect upon the physical world. Every child in kindergarten knows that if the proprietors of a certain salt-making machine had not forgotten to say "hocus pocus" at the critical moment, they could have stopped the synthesis of sodium chloride before their ship sank, and then the ocean wouldn't be salty. No self-respecting conjurer of the Middle Ages could possibly have gotten along in his profession without the word "abracadabra"; thousands of healers are doing business to-day with entire satisfaction to themselves on the simple phrase "subconscious mind"; Government, once based on "a square deal," now guarantees a

"new freedom," and every trade and profession has its own peculiar catchword or catch-phrase. At the Church of St. Crœsus the rector recently preached a brilliant and forceful sermon in developing the thought "Salvation is free," while an announcement in the current issue of his *Parish Visitor* called attention to a ten per cent. advance in pew rentals. Gentlemen whose sworn duty it is as officers of the court to thwart the laws seized with avidity a few years ago upon the expression "brain storm," and without such useful substantives as "la grippe," "malaria," and "biliaryness," the medical profession would have to abandon the use of placebos in curing imaginary ills.

Having thus established the potency, the frequency, the high importance of the catchwords of the day, without which none may hope to penetrate the editorial arcanum, the writer may be pardoned for attempting to elucidate the meaning of a phrase, knowledge of which is indispensable to every literary aspirant, which is ding-donged into the ears of every hopeful suitor of the muses, which neither the editor of the woman's page nor of the children's department may hope to escape—"Human Interest." Here endeth the digression. The Lesson for the Day is writ:

The class concerned is not a small one. Everybody has some story to tell, and everybody has a lingering ambition to get it into print, and it is because of the steady stream of manuscripts which pour into the publishing houses

in every large city that Government is able to stand the annual loss on second-class matter, for everybody's story comes and goes at letter rates, and is only second class when published.

Be it understood that what follows is treated from the hack writer's point of view—that of a poor orphan boy, with nothing between himself and the Charity Organisation Society save a typewriter and a few reams of paper—who must, therefore, sit up and take notice of the latest whims and foibles of the Man at the Desk.

The full force of those awful words had never struck our hack writer until he had occasion to visit the venerable Henry Mills Alden, editor of *Harper's Magazine*. His business was to submit the scenario of a Christmas feature, with illustrations. If you have never met Mr. Alden, it may be well to tell you that he is one of those exquisitely fine gentlemen of the old school whose perfect courtesy makes even the rejection of a manuscript an agreeable affair. Mr. Alden had promised a definite answer on the article by August, provided he received the copy by May 1. But let our afflicted friend continue the narration of the interview in his own language:

"I was delighted with my reception, for I had gone into his room in fear and trembling. You see, when I was a boy, I used to think I would rather be Henry Mills Alden than President of the United States, and I am by no means sure that I don't feel that way still. He had been

kindly and sympathetic. He had been interested. Judge, therefore, of my horror when, as I was bowing myself out of his sanctum, this distinguished man of letters called out to me:

“Chuck it full of human interest; that’s what we want.”

The effect on our poor friend was simply maddening. He said that he could not remember how he ever got down those circular stairs in the courtyard, but he fancies he must have bowled over at least two typewriter girls before emerging on Franklin Square.

When he came to my rooms, I poured him out a glass of soothing syrup, and, to ease his mind, permitted him to tell the whole sad story. It seems he had left the secluded editorial rooms of a Brooklyn family newspaper to sell pure literature to magazines and newspapers in New York, and had met with some success. In order to fill in spare time, he had apprenticed himself to the foreman of a newly opened encyclopedia factory.

“What we want,” said the foreman, “is human interest. Every article, no matter whether it is on Calculus, the Hydrostatic Paradox, Sanscrit, or Metaphysics, must be crammed full of human interest. Write like Arthur Brisbane. Never mind about accuracy—we’ve a lot of cheap specialists to attend to that. Start with a name, then an active verb, and make it breezy.”

Human interest was rubbed into our poor hack writer in that encyclopedia factory until he could feel it oozing out

again at every pore. It sounded above the noise of the typewriting machines, even above the commands of the publisher addressed to his subscription agents. It illuminated the walls in large lettering. In short, he imbibed human interest with each breath of murky atmosphere, until in the course of a few weeks, he would doubtless have collapsed, had not the encyclopedia factory collapsed first.

Then came a period of sweet, refreshing rest. He engaged his spare hours in reading copy on a commercial, or business man's newspaper. After the toil and hustle of the encyclopedia factory, he seemed to have entered a land of lotus-eaters. The happy days rolled by without event, but after he had been there a couple of weeks, the chief of the copy desk suddenly exclaimed, in tones of alarm: "Here's a human interest story."

"Kill it," replied the city editor, "or you'll lose your job."

During the remainder of his service there, the hateful term was never used, save with such unqualified and unprintable terms of execration as did his soul good. Sometimes, however, it reached him through the mails. He sent a paragraph to *Life*.

The editor of *Life* attacked him savagely for only enclosing a two-cent stamp instead of a stamped and addressed return envelope, and suggested that he was desirous of sketches possessing human interest.

He sent an article to a Sunday edi-

tor showing the comparative cost of building a battleship in the navy yard and by private contract. The editor, who said this lacked human interest, thought he might be able to use a story telling how many people could be killed at a single discharge by the battleships Connecticut and Louisiana, both using their primary batteries at point blank.

These things had not made him pessimistic, he said, but just before he called on Mr. Alden he had received a regretful note from the associate editor of a popular weekly, returning some flower photographs "because the old man says there is no human interest in flower pictures; that there's no action to them," so the term had finally gotten a bit on his nerves.

Finding my young friend somewhat relieved after having unburdened himself regarding this haunting phrase, I suggested he ought to fortify himself by learning just what human interest means, and that any of a dozen or more editors would gladly give him a definition.

Next day he returned, saying he had been refused information by four magazine and seven newspaper editors, and then handed me the following statements:

Henry Sherman Adams, editor of *The Spur*: "Nothing of the kind is permitted in our editorial rooms."

The Sunday editor of a yellow newspaper: "When the elevator boy sees the bulletin of a Supplement story, and says: 'Gee, I'll have to get that paper.'

I have struck something with human interest."

John Palmer Gavit, managing editor of the New York *Evening Post*, admitted that his definition wasn't original, but gave it for what it was worth: "There are two elements, either of which assures Human Interest to a story—Sex and Money. If they are combined, the result is a first-page spread—except in the *Evening Post*.

"Seriously, I should say that 'Human Interest' applies to those facts and relationships which 'hit a man right where he lives'; those things which touch or appeal to him in his *personal* capacity, which make him put himself in the other fellow's place. Skill in treatment of the matter *might* give 'human interest' to an article about the psychology of the Dinosaur; only a few writers could do it, however."

Prof. Robert Emmet MacAlarney, of the Pulitzer School of Journalism, sometime city editor of the *Evening Post*, the *Mail*, and the *New York Tribune*, gave it as his opinion that Human Interest and Local Colour might be used as synonymous phrases, but that Human Interest also implied a story of personality with a touch of emotionalism.

Royal J. Davis, who tells a class of hopeful young men at New York University how to write editorials, when he isn't writing them himself, said:

"Human interest is that element in a story that causes it to appeal to the reader's heart rather than his head."

A chie, who chanced to be present while

Mr. Davis was thus clearing up the whole question, ventured upon the irreverence: "Human interest is best exemplified by the man who hews to the line." Not unnaturally, he added a plea for anonymity.

J. Ranken Towse, who ought perforse to know, because for more than forty years he has sat in the seat of the scornful as melodrama and all kinds of drama have been played, gave this as his comment on the discussion:

ἀκούσισθ' ἀν τοῦ θηρίου ἀντοῦ.

I said: "Don't be so easily discouraged. Try again. Go to Chester S. Lord, managing editor of the New York *Sun*. If any man on earth knows what human interest means as applied to journalism, he should."

A week later our friend came back, looking younger and more vigorous than I had seen him in months.

"Mr. Lord said he didn't care to give a definition offhand," he remarked, "but added that if he could frame a good one by night, he would mail it to me. He hasn't done so, and as I know him to be a man of his word, I am greatly encouraged to find he doesn't know any more about human interest than I do."

Taking up the matter myself, I asked a lawyer friend to define human interest for me.

"Are you serious?"

"Never more so in my life."

"Then give me time to think." This is what he thought: "Human interest, as attaching to any object, is that which attracts the attention of every person."

My next victim was a dancing mas-

ter. He said: "Human interest is that which interests me, and should, therefore, interest all mankind."

Perhaps the dancing master's definition is the very thing we have been seeking. Human interest may mean a million things, but to every Man at the Desk it is that which interests him, and should, he thinks, interest all mankind. "Interpreted in this way," said I, "human interest seems to afford a pretty fair test of the merit of a contribution, provided the editors have not been standardized to such an extent that they all think alike on any given subject."

"Well, they haven't as yet, glory be," replied our friend the hack writer.

MAKES VERSE TO ORDER

Saponaceous Poet Illustrates His Surprisingly Simple Process.

The unusually large attendance at a special meeting of the Amalgamated Protective Association of International Jokesmiths, New York Local, held last evening, may be easily accounted for. The subject, "A Practical Talk on Machine-Made Verse," was attractive in itself, while the eminence of the speaker—Prof. Petrie Villon Pettingell—was beyond question. For the past ten years Professor Pettingell has been poet laureate to one of the largest soap factories in America, during which time his poems have appeared in all the leading magazines, handsomely and appropriately illustrated. It may be stated without exaggeration that no author of the day has been so persistently sought after by the publishers. To have captured one of his verses suffices in itself to give a gold-mark rating, and it is said that when Edward Bok read his last contribution to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, which occupied a full page, and saw the check in payment, he wept with joy.

There's nothing ethereal about the ap-

pearance of this distinguished poet. He is, in fact, robust and hearty, florid with good living, alert, despite his 320 pounds avoirdupois, with the insinuating manner of a popular clergyman blended with the dignity and firmness of a banker while turning down a loan. His attire was "rich, not gaudy," but such as to reflect credit upon his own taste and the skill of his tailor. After listening blandly to the eulogistic remarks of the Chairman in introducing him, Professor Pettingell plunged directly into his subject.

"Not posterity, but the generation in which you were born; not antiquity, but the men and women of to-day—these, gentlemen, if you please, should be your study and your reward. Why dig into history for material? Isn't history being made all about you every day? Can you cash the reward of posthumous fame in an automobile? Let's be practical men. Let's find what the world is demanding to-day, and then let's supply that demand at the very highest profit to ourselves. Don't go mooning about, waiting for inspiration. The almighty dollar is good enough inspiration for any bard of to-day. Don't waste time when you have a subject, worrying about such trifles as iambics, pentameters, dactyls, and spondees. Get busy. Don't pull your hair out and squirm around like a small boy with colic because you can't find a word that suits you. The first word is always the best word, unless it's at the end of the line, and then, perhaps, you'll have to consult your dictionary of rhymes.

"Machine-made verse, my fellow-toil-

ers, has not yet reached perfection, but it has already had a marked effect upon the trade. There's Bliss Carman declaring that poetry is a luxury which he can't afford to produce. Of course, he can't. Poetry—real poetry, mind you, the kind Bliss Carman and I want to write and can't afford to, is unprofitable. Would you like to sell such a manuscript as 'Paradise Lost' for \$40, or would you prefer to receive \$5 a line, like my colleague, the laureate to King George? We use the same method, I assure you, and neither has a moustache to conceal his lip—there's no magic about it."

Seizing a piece of chalk, Professor Pettingell turned to the blackboard and drew a series of horizontal lines, which he intersected with perpendicular bars at regular intervals. "I am now," he remarked, talking as he worked, "preparing an enlarged copy of a telegraph blank. As a struggling young poet, I always wrote on telegraph blanks to save white paper, which, by the way, was much cheaper then than now, and I advise you to do the same. Here, you observe, we have a given number of lines with a given number of other lines, meant by the telegraph company as a convenience in counting words. Fix the chart in your mind, count your feet in the same way, and you are making progress. The rest is easy."

Facing his audience again, Professor Pettingell requested the jokesmiths to write down on slips of paper topics for improvisation in order that he might

demonstrate his method of working. "You will understand," he continued, "that where one writes constantly on one theme, facility in composition grows, and this will be an excellent test, since I trust no gentleman will suggest anything frothy, that is to say, saponaceous.

"Something optimistic in dialect is requested," read the professor, as he drew a slip of paper from the secretary's hat. "Good. No dialect specified. Better still. Here we go," and while he talked, he worked away at the blackboard: "Let's get an irregular meter as appropriate to the crudity of dialect verse, say, verses of five lines; first and second, eight; third and fifth, seven; fourth, four; second and fifth to rhyme." While talking he had rubbed out all but six horizontal lines on the blackboard, leaving the number of spaces to each line as he had stated.

"Always try to get away from the ordinary, the too obvious," the speaker resumed, "but make everything simple and homely. Everything's in the title. Ever hear of a Cadjun Farmer? No? Arouses curiosity, doesn't it? Then it's a good title. We'll call this, if you please, gentlemen, 'The Cadjun Farmer,' and you will observe that, as there is only one absolute rhyme needed, we best get it ready for each verse, the very first thing. Evangeline and green seem to hang together pretty well, so we'll put them down. How's that?"

The poet stood aside, and this is the way the blackboard looked:

				E	van	ge	line
							green

Rapidly filling the spaces with syllables, he completed the first verse in ninety-seven seconds, and then, repeating the process, evolved the subjoined specimen of machine-made verse in fifteen minutes and three seconds, according to Barney's stop-watch, borrowed for the occasion:

THE CADJUN FARMER.

I once knowed a Cadjun farmer
In the Land o' Evangeline,
Where roses and oranges
Mingle their breath,
And the grass is al'ays green.

A queer old duffer, brown with toil,
'Ceptin' where he was gray with age—
Nigh as mild as the climate,
Kind as the soll—
Never seen him in a rage.

Talkin' one day 'bont Beauregard,
Who lived down jest around the bend,
Shoulders bow'd which had been starr'd,
Waitin' fer taps,
And nearin' his earthly end;

Gossipin' lies was told o' him
Which nobody, now, would believe,
Till my old Cadjun friend rose
 Up in defence:
 "Peter, I t'ink, is deceive."

Only reason he could advance
May not seem convincin' to you,
But, to recall it is sweet,
 When knockers meet;
 And to me it still riugs true:

"I dunno Gin'r'nal Beauregard,
Mais, ma cousin spik well o' heem."
Hammers make an awful din—
 When I buts in—
 I al'ays "spik well o' heem."

Having rubbed out the last of these remarkable stanzas from the blackboard, Professor Pettingell rearranged the lines which he was pleased to refer to as the "muse's tiled floor," and selecting another slip from the hat, announced that he had been requested to write two verses on a domestic theme, suitable for filling a stick and a half at the bottom of a column.

"This is too easy," said the professor, and putting on the rhyming final words for the first verse, which he said should have eight lines, alternating ten and eight feet, he paused long enough to say: "Domestic verse is a very good sort. Keep away from mother, however, for if everybody works but father, mother is certainly overworked. Something about children is sure to go. Those who haven't any are sure to want some, and those who have will be consoled by the knowledge that the very people who want them most haven't any. Let us work out the thought along those lines," and

turning again to the blackboard, Professor Pettingell rapidly filled in the vacant spaces for syllables with his chalk, the result being:

SPOILING THE CHILDREN.

Working at forging or riveting plate;
I'm all the time thinking of toys.
When I get home, there's my wife at the gate,
In the midst of a group of boys.
Lots of nice playthings I whittle and carve,
Of the sorts most youngsters like best;
Wife's just like me, for I think that she'd starve,
Ere denying a child's request.

The neighbours' little folks come and go—
We keep them as long as we may;
And their parents complain: "We spoil them so."
Adding, "Too much kindness don't pay."
But we know for all that, they don't mean it—
They dote on their own little elves;
Still, I sometimes think they're sorry, a bit,
That we have no children ourselves.

"A limerick on politics'? Really, gentlemen, I am surprised," said Professor Pettingell, as he drew another slip from the hat. "Of course, when it comes to anything as easy as a limerick, and on politics, no machine work is necessary. I've promised to respond to a toast at the Sphinx Club dinner, and my automobile is waiting now, but I'll give you your limerick while I'm gettling on my togs," and as he was slipping into his dust-coat and adjusting his goggles, the great man declaimed:

THEODORUS LOQUITUR.

I won't run for President,
No, not in any event—
Unless I foresee
They'll nominate me
When the Wilson boom is spent.

A rising vote of thanks was extended to the saponaceous bard as he left the back room, and the delegates cheered him enthusiastically. In the brief discussion which followed, the delegate from Yonkers remarked that he was reminded of his college days, when he used to sit under the great elm tree, with H. Flaccus in his fist, and meditate on the poetic art—it was all so different.

The member from the Brooklyn Press Club said that he thought there were several jokesmiths in the New York local who could turn out better verse, though they mightn't have as much of a drag with the publisher, not being connected with the soap business. He had more to say, but the Chair stopped the sound of his hammer with the gavel, declaring the meeting adjourned.

THE CRITIC CONFESSES

Choice Rather than Necessity Drives
Him Toward Music.

Music critics, unlike musicians, are made, not born. The man born a poet cannot help falling into verse any more than Mr. Wegg could. Bobby Burns, who had no education to speak of, Byron, who had too much, the late Bloodgood Cutter, and all their kind, itched like mad until their thoughts were set down on paper. Schubert wrote immortal melody atop a beer barrel in a Vienna cellar. From Bach to Wagner, through the long list of the tone poets, all wrote just because they couldn't help it. The air, the opera, the symphony, kept humming through their heads, and the only relief came in inscribing melody and harmony on ruled paper.

With music critics it is quite different. An eminent authority on baseball may have found it necessary to pad out his space string in winter by taking up a side line; or the same motive may have actuated a distinguished special writer on yachting. Such a genius as Berlioz became a critic in order to feed the divine

fire of his inspiration, finding it impossible to buy the fuel with music. I, who am not a genius, became a music critic because I like to hear good music, and being a newspaper writer, should otherwise have had neither time nor money to indulge this taste. If I could write a good book, I would not write book reviews. If I could write a good play, I wouldn't write dramatic criticism. But as between writing editorials, subject to the policy of the paper and suggestions from the business office, or police court news assigned by the city editor—between that and getting as much money by writing about the things one likes, there isn't much choice, is there? Some critics, you see, are made by force of circumstance rather than by divine inspiration, or by a desire to elevate the standard of taste, or to pose as authority.

It may be I take the rôle of music critic, which I have played for fifteen years, too unseriously. If so, there are enough of my colleagues having a higher opinion of their own importance to tone up the collective average. Indeed, I fancy that in the little room at the Metropolitan reserved for critics there might be found a double quartet to chorus the opposite view, *forte, animato, maestoso, con fuoco*; and it is well that it should be so. I fancy the man who looks upon his department as the most important of any publication and upon himself as the most important personality in any such department, will do his very best to bolster up this mistaken

estimate. I know a society editor afflicted with this delusion; but he works so hard that he cannot enter a restaurant without spreading out a bundle of "copy" between the dishes at table.

At the risk of making this an apology, as well as a confession, I venture to express the hope that I may some day have the means to enjoy the best music without need of telling three hundred thousand or more readers why; whether Carubonci had tears in his voice; how Madame Hemp-Farrier looked and acted; whether the second soprano was off key; the basso dependent upon the prompter; the conductor too fast or too slow, according to actual stop watch and metronome; how the lights were managed; whether the audience was large and appreciative or otherwise, and whether the music was good, bad, indifferent, and why.

Frankly, I have never either written or read any music criticism which seemed to me of great value. At best it is one man's opinion—that of an expert, if you will; but the verdicts of experts are frequently reversed by public opinion, the court of last resort for all workers in the arts. I have never complained that Hofmann doesn't understand the soft pedal, that Paderewski has too much rubato, that Rosenthal is too muscular. It has seemed to me that these gentlemen do the best they can, and I love to hear them, not to lecture them. And when my good colleagues are overheard at the chop-house, telling how they slated Herr

This and Madame That, how Signor S—— is coming in for a roast along with M. F——, I think of the little mistakes we ourselves have made.

I recall with delight the kind letter I received from a singer who had been featured at a concert I reviewed, and of whom, knowing her voice and songs full well, I had said some pleasant things. It informed me that she would doubtless have justified my praise had she not been called away from town by the illness of a relative, and forced me to admit I had been drinking Rhenish with the manager when she should have been, according to the programme, captivating her audience. It is fresh in my mind how the newspaper then having the largest circulation in New York printed an elaborate review of the wrong opera, some years ago, written and signed by an eminent American composer who had got his matter in type in advance, but had neglected to go to the performance, and could not well know that the bill had been changed at the last moment. I remember a concert of last season where an aria from an unknown opera by an unknown composer was on the programme, and the critic of an afternoon paper remarked next day, in all seriousness, that this opera ought to have a complete performance, as the aria showed genuine talent, wholly oblivious of the fact that the soloist had substituted "Ach Du mein holder Abendstern"!

But there is one thing to be said in favor of music criticism as a trade, certain of the musicians and music journals

to the contrary notwithstanding: there is no bribery of critics. Managers have either done me the honour to assume I cannot be bought, or that my opinions are not worth purchasing. In an honourable career, which is, I trust, yet far from its close, only once have I been tempted (this really begins to look like a confession), and then I fell. At the *début* of a new singer I neglected to comment either upon voice or method, confining myself strictly to justifiable enthusiasm over personal beauty, elegance of costume, and judicious programme-building. My friends, who were her friends, had taken me, a lonely Bohemian, into their home for dinner. I had dined well, a habit I have when occasion presents itself, and the daughter of the house took advantage of post-prandial good humour. She offered, on my promise not to "roast" the singer, to bake me another pumpkin pie, similar to that I had enjoyed at dinner, and send it to the office. *Mea culpa!* And the crime thus publicly confessed, I hope for forgiveness, and **promise to sin no more.**

JOKE'S ORIGIN TRACED

Point in Ethics Settled for Conductors of Columns.

Canned jokes were discussed from the point of view of mercantile ethics at the last session of the Amalgamated Protective Association of International Jokesmiths, New York Local, which has lately been in correspondence with the Boss Publishers' Association regarding certain old material alleged to have been foisted off as this year's crop. The publishers wished to reserve the right to relabel and repack old goods for the consumer, denying the right of the jokesmiths to work off old cans unless they were registered with the date of previous publication.

"A joke," said a well-known jobber, in the course of the animated discussion, "has no father. Of course no self-respecting workman would give Joe Miller a place in his scrap pile in these days, but I insist every man has a right to take his material where he finds it.

"If people absolutely demand anecdotes of warriors and statesmen, I claim the right to dress up any old tale out of Plutarch or Herodotus to meet the mar-

ket, and the same is true of yarns for the press agent. There is a wealth of material to be had in biographies of deceased stars which would go infinitely better than the loss of diamonds, milk baths, or fake mash letters.

"The wisdom of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, dressed in the homely dialect of backwoods Illinois, serves admirably for Abraham Lincoln, and I lately sold a splendid nature story on bee culture out of the agricultural poems of P. Vergilius Maro. Suppose this new label rule had been in force in the time of our lamented colleague, W. Shakespeare. Could he have written 'The Comedy of Errors' without the earlier comedy of 'The Menæchmi'?

"Didn't he swipe some of his best plays from Italians, and didn't Boccaccio himself plagiarize from the Greek, and would the Greeks themselves have even known how to write if they hadn't stolen their alphabet from the Phœnicians? I submit to my fellow-laborers that the world has been laughing and weeping over stale material since Eve first asked Adam if her fig leaf hung straight, and that since no man can hope to tell a story wholly new, the \$1,000 cash prizes are properly awarded to those who tell them best."

Cordial applause with which this outburst of eloquence was greeted indicated that the speaker had proved his case. The discussion which followed threw new light on the mother-in-law joke and revealed the interesting fact that certain writers famous for quotations of the classics wear out each year three sets of

Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" and two of Young's "Night Thoughts," while Roget's "Thesaurus" is replaced quarterly.

"If the gentlemen will permit," said a delegate from the Brooklyn Press Club, "I should like to place on record an instance of justifiable plagiarism."

Permission being accorded, he then read the following anecdote, which on motion was placed among the archives as exhibit B, to be used in case of litigation with the boss publishers:

"Tennessee has 'gone dry' — you wouldn't have thought that of her, would you?" a representative from that glorious old Commonwealth recently remarked, sadly. "But it's a fact; you can't buy whiskey anywhere in the State.

"But, after all, maybe it isn't such a hardship," he continued, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "Whiskey isn't what it used to be—folks are in such a hurry these days that they will take anything and gulp it down. Wasn't that way when *I* was a young fellow.

"I remember that on one occasion a dealer in Memphis had got in a sample barrel and invited the Mayor and the City Judge to try it and give expert opinions on its quality. The Mayor picked up his glass and sipped it, smacking his lips.

"'Ah! That's pretty good, but—er—there seems to be a slight taste of iron about it—what do you think, Judge?'" he said.

"The Judge allowed the amber liquid to flow smoothly down his throat.

"'Well, Colonel,' he said, 'I can't detect iron, but the odour of leather is unmistakable.'

"They argued for a while, and then the dealer had the contents of the barrel carefully strained, with the result that they found that, in some way, a leather-headed upholsterer's tack had gotten into the barrel. They certainly demanded good whiskey in those days," the Representative concluded.—[Harper's Weekly.

"Do I object," the gentleman from Brooklyn continued, "because one of my brothers has revamped a story I published eleven years ago? Certainly not. I glory in it.

"I will do the same to-morrow with one of his jokes, if I find he has ever written anything as good, as sparkling, as original as this story, which I will now relate in its original form, merely prefacing it with the statement that Proctor Knott was then in the public eye, Mr. Blackburn was a United States Senator, and Mr. Carlisle, Secretary of the Treasury.

"Proctor Knott had just received a barrel of especially fine Bourbon whiskey, and knowing John G. Carlisle and Joe Blackburn prided themselves on their knowledge of red liquor, invited them to his home to broach the barrel. Gov. Knott drew a decanter of the stuff from the wood with his own hands and placed it, with glasses, before his admiring friends.

"They sniffed and tasted and smacked their lips. Mr. Knott anxiously awaited

the verdict. Mr. Carlisle spoke first.

"'Hand-made, sour-mash, copper-distilled, Governor,' remarked the distinguished son of Kentucky. 'Very delicious quality, and, I should say, about forty-three years old.'

"'You're right as to the process, John,' observed the Senator, holding his refilled glass to the light in a critical manner. 'I should say it's full forty-four years since that licker came from the still-house.'

"'But the quality, gentlemen?' said Mr. Knott, who knew they were about right so far.

"Blackburn and Carlisle each drank off a big hooker and filled up again.

"'Governor,' said the Secretary of the Treasury, 'I am sorry to have to say it, but this otherwise perfect article has a slight flavor of iron rust.'

"'Impossible!' said the Governor, 'I just drew it from the wood myself.'

"'I see what you mean, John,' said the Blue Grass Senator, 'but if I'm not mistaken, the flavor is rather that of leather.'

"Gov. Knott was indignant. He knew the liquor was good, and he knew the guests were wrong as to flavour, but right, or nearly so, in other respects.

"Neither of his distinguished guests would retract his criticism, however; so as the decanter was running low, Mr. Knott invited them to go to the cellar with him, where he would draw off all the whiskey before their own eyes, and thus convince them that it had not come in contact either with leather or iron.

"Accordingly they descended to the lower regions, where the barrel was examined. It had been distilled before the passage of the internal revenue law, and a certificate from the first collector for the Louisville district showed its age to be exactly forty-three years and six months, while it was really hand-made, copper-distilled, sour-mash corn whiskey. But at the bottom of the barrel an old rusty carpet tack with a leather head was found.

"This, gentlemen," went on the delegate from Brooklyn. "I consider one of my best original stories, and it is a matter of pride and pleasure with me that it still passes current."

"I should like to ask the gentleman a question."

The speaker this time was a foreman in the encyclopedia factory at Newark, who was present as a guest.

"Proceed, sir," said the Chair.

"Has the gentleman ever read 'Don Quixote'?"

"Not lately."

"May I read an extract from a volume I am taking home to my little boy?"

Permission being granted, the guest from Newark read as follows:

"Sancho Panza (Part II, Chap. XIII) explains his skill in distinguishing wines by saying that he is descended from two famous tasters, of whom he relates this story:

"They gave to these two some wine to taste out of a hogshead, asking their opinions of the state, quality, goodness, or badness of the wine; the one of them

proved it with the tip of his tongue, the other only smelt of it. The first said that that wine savoured of iron; the second said, rather of goat's leather.

"The owner protested the hogshead was clean, and that the wine had no kind of mixture by which it should receive any savour of iron or leather. Notwithstanding, the two famous tasters stood to what they had said.

"Time ran on, the wine was sold, and when the vessel was cleansed there was found in it a little key with a leathern thong hanging at it. Now you may see whether——"

At this point half a dozen of the delegates claimed the recognition of the Chair, but before any had been recognized a frowsy-headed young man wearing a white apron entered and remarked:

"Gents, I am sorry to disturb youse, but they's a new roundsman on this here beat, and the old man says, says he, 'Lights out at midnight till we gets next,' and that goes."

This announcement precipitated an immediate adjournment, but it is understood that the matter is to be brought up again at the next meeting.

BECOMING A PUBLISHER

Salesmanship More Important Than Knowledge of Printing.

"Are you a college man?"

"University of Weissnichtwo, '05."

That seemed to satisfy the questioner, for the question wasn't propounded until the interview had lasted fully fifteen minutes; hence a B.A. could hardly have been a prerequisite. But it didn't quite satisfy the interviewer, who wanted a job but who didn't want to get it under false pretences.

"Have you a preference for college-bred men?" the interviewer asked.

"Only because of one thing," was the reply. "They don't, as a rule, display any more ability or energy than any other class, and often they are less intelligent in business matters, but it is none the less a fact that they know how to carry themselves, to make a good appearance, and they like this sort of thing better than the confinement of an office."

This sort of thing happened to be peddling an expensive edition of a book. The advertisement which had led the young man to the publishing house said

nothing about book peddling, but had merely held out the offer of a chance in the publishing business, with "quick promotion, if merited."

More subscription books are printed in New York every year than in all the other American cities together, although there are many subscription publishing houses, in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and minor cities, and not less than 20,000 agents are employed in disposing of this class of merchandise in New York alone. It is a skilled profession with a few, and a last resort for those out of work, peddling books, and it pays or it doesn't pay, according to the tact and energy the individual may possess.

The manager of the house with the expensive book was careful to explain that the work hadn't come from the printer as yet, but they were taking orders as fast as they could, having one complete volume to show, with a chance of getting out the remaining seven within the month. He wasn't presenting the ordinary proposition, he said. Not at all.

There were houses which expected a man to go from house to house within a certain territory, and report on each with the accuracy of a census taker. On such a piece of goods as they had exclusively that would be a waste of time.

It would only be necessary to interview persons whose names were arranged alphabetically upon an easy route, and who, having been chosen because of their interest in literature and art, would be sure to accord the agent a pleasant reception. No danger of being

ordered out of the house or having the dogs sent after you if you represented this house. No, indeed. That might happen if you allied yourself with some of the fake concerns down the avenue, but certainly not here.

Profits? My dear sir, that would depend entirely upon your own talents. The last book they had put out, which wasn't nearly as good a seller as this promised to be, had drawn them the very pick of the canvassers.

Many men and women had cleared \$100 to \$150 a week, and they hadn't been killing themselves at that. Personally he should never advise any one to work more than five hours a day. After such a stretch a man seemed to lose something of the magnetism which was the secret of the book agent's strength.

He would venture to say that a man absolutely new in the business ought to be able to earn \$15 the first week, although when he entered the publishing line himself he made that much the first day.

The interviewer might be a trifle dense, he confessed, but he couldn't see just how peddling books would fit him for advancement in the publishing business.

That objection, he soon learned, was puerile. No man could master the details of so intricate a business except by beginning at the bottom.

That wouldn't be at the printer's case, because books were now printed from machine-set type, and there was no chance for any mature human animal to enter this trade, which was restricted by

the unions, even if the publishers had anything to do with typesetting and printing—which as a rule they didn't.

Obviously the man who had learned how to peddle books was the best qualified person to teach others how to do so, and the publishing business in these days was largely a matter of selling books.

There was but one other objection the applicant had to offer. He confessed that he was too modest and retiring to compete with such book agents as had invaded his home from time to time; besides which, he had never been able to make an impression as a talker.

Merely a bagatelle, these notions were, so the manager said. As far as the flow of language was concerned, there was no occasion to worry.

They had a nice little "spiel" ready in pamphlet form which could be quickly memorized and which supplied all the oratory necessary. As for the cheek, that would quickly come.

It all depended upon the mental attitude assumed. Here's the attitude for agent, man or woman, who would be successful, and it might be Mary Baker G. Eddy's advice to salespeople of all sorts and conditions:

"I've got something to sell that you really need, and if I can make you see how badly you need it I'll be doing you a favour, besides pocketing any commission."

The morning paper had given still another address of a publisher who was in need of an assistant. This time it was a matter of complete indifference to the

manager whether the applicant had been through college or not. What he wanted was a man who could do things, who was accustomed to exercise authority over others and make himself useful around the office.

"There'll be a little preliminary training first," he remarked, urbanely. "The easiest way to find if a man is fitted to command is to see whether he will obey.

"Now, I've got an entirely new proposition. Nothing like it has ever been started.

"If you go into a man's house while he is away from home and tell his wife that you have a set of books costing \$50, she'll tell you in nine cases out of ten that her husband must be consulted before she can do anything. That means another call and a waste of time, and time is money.

"If you say 'Here is something your children absolutely must have if you want them to keep up with their studies in school,' she'll say pretty much the same thing. That's right where you clinch matters.

"You reply: 'Madam'—always say 'Madam'—'would you stop to ask your husband whether you might buy a newspaper or a glass of soda water? Of course you wouldn't. Very well. Here's a weekly publication that will cost you just the same number of pennies you are now throwing away on your newspaper.'

"Then you open your folder. Turn the leaves over rapidly until her eye is struck by a picture, and you've got her.

"In the advertising matter which you will have read and committed to memory

you will have all sorts of information about that picture. You can tell what celebrated gallery it is from, who painted it, what it is worth, and what it is about.

"If you don't happen to remember the descriptive matter, you can turn it off. Let her ask you about it first, and then lose the place. Turn the pictures over again rapidly until you have found one you do know about and fire off your facts about that one.

"She is sure to be impressed. Then if one of the children happens in, the thing's done. All children love pictures.

"Show a few coloured plates and the mother will say to herself: 'Well, it's only a matter of a few cents, and if hubby doesn't like it I'll cut off the newspaper until it is paid for.' You can make her sign your order, and you get away before she has time to change her mind."

"But suppose she says the children have too much home-work already?"

"That's nicely covered in this mimeographed circular. This tells you to dwell upon the fact that this is an age of specialization and that the routine mapped out in the public schools is on so extensive a scale that it's quite impossible for a child to keep up, and then you show how this publication aids in history, in geography, and it's easier than if she hadn't raised the objection.

"If anybody ever says why she doesn't want to buy, you've got her sure. You can answer every objection faster than she can give it and the only chance she has to escape you is to keep still."

Perhaps it isn't quite right to tell trade

secrets, but then it isn't quite right, on the other hand, for employers to advertise for one kind of help when they want another; so the ethics of this little revelation of how the festive book-agent works his little game, aided and abetted thereto and paid therefor by the publisher, will average up about right.

One thing seemed pretty clear to the interviewer after three hours of enlightenment, and that was that, even if some of the agents did clear \$100 to \$150 a week, their energy, their patience, their keen insight into human nature, and an equal amount of leg work would probably bring them the same financial return in any other line of work.

LITERARY GOLDBRICKS

Jokesmiths Discuss Agencies' Selling Terms, but Are Interrupted.

Gold bricks were the theme at the last session of the Amalgamated Protective Association of International Jokesmiths, New York Local, a gentlemen's agreement having been at last effected with the Boss Publishers' Association regarding the matter of canned jokes, which had long been in controversy.

In the slang of the workshop, the gold brick is a bright and sparkling witticism in prose or verse in special demand for filling out odd corners and the gaps between the end of one article and the top of the next page in magazines. Gold bricks are a natural byproduct of the jokesmith's trade and fetch an average market price of a dollar each, although some of the Boss Publishers readily pay two dollars, and if the gold brick is accepted in connection with a suitably drawn comic picture an extra dollar is added for the artist.

Gold bricks, again, are divided into two classes—those which will stand the acid test and those which will not. The special phase of the question discussed was

whether it was advisable to dispose of the gold bricks through agencies handling such articles—gold-brick agencies, in fact.

At the suggestion of the Chair, several of the delegates went in turn to the blackboard and inscribed gold bricks culled from the foreign press and adapted to the American market. From the collection of specimens so made a few are reproduced:

It is said that modern discoveries in physiology prove apples are an excellent brain food, the phosphoric acid which they contain restoring vitality and energy.

Heavens! There is nothing new in that theory. It was solely with a view of giving Adam new ideas that Eve plucked the first apple mentioned in history.

A celebrated actress was in the midst of her toilette when the maid interrupted her to ask:

“What color will madame have her hair to-day?”

“Black. I am going to a funeral.”

A notorious counterfeiter on trial before a German court:

“Prisoner, have you anything further to say in your defence before sentence is passed?”

“Yes, your Honor. I wish to remind the Court that on all pieces of the queer of my manufacture the portrait of the Kaiser is most flattering.”

It was announced that these and other gold bricks had been freshly translated from famous European publications, and that the delegates who had picked them out at odd moments from the scrap heap were desirous of disposing of them at a

net price per gross f. o. b. Reports of the sub-committees on the investigation of gold-brick agencies were then called for.

"In accordance with instructions from the Chair," said a representative of the German Press Club, "I entered into correspondence with the Literary Trust of Indianapolis, Ind. Having omitted to use either office or club stationery, the Trust had no means of knowing that I have been making a poor but honest living at the jokesmith's trade for twenty years, and it sent me some beautiful neat type-writing circulars describing the huge emoluments of journalism as a profession, and sought to teach me by mail how to become either a journalist, a poet, an advertising man, or a playwright.

"A small fee would be charged in advance, but as I began to get on to the wrinkles of the craft they would give me occasional assignments and buy my work at a fair market price, so I would be paid while learning.

"I wrote again to inquire the current rate for gold-bricks, and was informed that they only bought from those taking their regular courses and paying in advance. Then they began to flood my mail with pamphlets of testimonials, application blanks, interviews on the profits of authorship, and other follow-up letters, so I wrote inquiring how much they would charge to teach me how to write plays like David Belasco, Theodore Kremer, George M. Cohan, and Hal Reid.

"They undertook to teach me in a year

for \$15 in advance. I have written again, saying that on second thought I would rather manufacture plays like those of George Bernard Shaw or Henry Arthur Jones, but as yet I have received no answer."

"It is my privilege to report an interview," said the delegate from Long Island City, "with the gentlemanly manager of the Consolidated Literature Company of New York. I found him in the third story front hall bedroom, which he and a stenographer have converted to business use by the installation of three chairs, a desk, a file cabinet, and recommendations from eminent writers.

"I did not waste his time with questions, but took such literature as he had ready and bowed myself out. The Consolidated Literature Company is described in its own booklets as representing all of the literary periodicals and publishers of this country, gathering material for them from all sources. Fees for placing manuscripts are \$1 for 4,000 words or less, \$2 for one between 4,000 and 10,000, and \$5 for each longer manuscript, but it will give its services to two short poems for the fee of \$1.

"Besides, the C. L. C. has professional advisers under the direction of a literary expert, gives helpful criticism at a minimum of \$2, and does typewriting. There is nothing in its prospectus, however, to indicate that the C. L. C. sells gold-bricks, and I think we may therefore eliminate it from consideration."

"I was assigned to visit the Hurrah Syndicate," said the Brooklyn Press Club

delegate. "This syndicate, according to the booklets which I brought away on my first visit, charges \$5 per annum for membership, 20 per cent. on sales, and promises at least one assignment a month to all who are accepted as members.

"Shortly after my visit I received a lovely lithographed letter with my name written in by typewriter, in which a sad tale was related of the syndicate being obliged to turn down orders for lack of material, and urging this as a reason why I should send in my application at once. There's a note on the application saying that it must be accompanied by cash, but I suppose the syndicate wants material more than money.

"I went in and was informed that the syndicate was selling its gold-bricks to other syndicates and deducting the 20 per cent. commission.

"'Have you got a pull?'

"'No,' said the manager.

"'Then why can't I send in the gold-brick myself, and take a chance, thus saving that 20 per cent., to say nothing of the \$5?'

"'You can,' said the manager, 'but sale on commission is all we pretend to do, and it's an irksome job, as you know.'

"In view of the facts ascertained by myself and my colleagues on committee, I venture to suggest that we pass up the gold-brick agencies and establish a headquarters in Barney's back room. The 20 per cent. can go into a kitty, and there ought to be enough at the end of the

month to pay Barney for handling the mail, and even to buy a few original packages after the discussions on meeting nights."

"Does the Chair understand the gentleman to put his suggestion before the local in the form of a resolution?"

"I move you, Mr. President, that the matter go over until next fall," said the spokesman of the Yonkers group, "and that, before taking action, every member, that he may realize the momentous nature of such an undertaking, be required to familiarize himself with the history of the Blue Pencil Club."

Several gentlemen were on their feet in a moment to debate this question, but the frowsy-headed young man with the apron appeared and said:

"Gents, they is a feller who used to belong has told Barney that his uncle is dead, and has left two rounds apiece for youse, sayin' as how he hopes fer to be excused from oprudin' his grief on youse."

Under the circumstances a motion to adjourn, upon which there was no debate, was instantly put and carried.

STORY WEEKLIES PASS

Their Obit, Preceded by Philosophical Thoughts on Ash Barrels.

Most men of middle age who write for a living have an Ash Barrel. Its contents may be chiefly the cinders of dead hopes, the fluffy ash of leading articles on public questions solved years ago, duplicate proofs of a story long forgotten, notes for essays never written, fragments of a play never completed; or even the scenario of a ballet, worked out to the last choreographic figure. It is sure to be the receptacle for rejected addresses, and therefore an object of tender interest to the man, and of aversion to the woman who looks after him, whether she be mother, wife, or sister. Heaven bless her, whichever she may be, the evidence that any bit of scribbling has failed to bring its price is a source of annoyance, besides which the Ash Barrel is far from ornamental. Yet there are ample grounds on which it may be defended. It has happened more than once that some sudden and belated success has made it worth while for the writing man to pass the entire contents of his Ash Barrel through a sifter, finely meshed, and the

alchemy of the publishing trade has converted every bit of material thus recovered into gold. Without an Ash Barrel the posthumous glory of a definitive edition becomes impossible. Without an Ash Barrel the orderly appearance so dear to housewives cannot be maintained in the home. Many other reasons might be given, but two will suffice, the sentimental folly of the writing man, and the gentle tolerance of the woman. The sentimental folly of a man grows during vacations, the tolerance of the woman lessens. Thus the contents of a certain Ash Barrel had been sifted to a period no later than 1905, as shown by newspaper clippings and magazine articles, when a halt was called. There remained in the sifter, however, the manuscript printed below the dash, dating from 1906, and dealing with a class of publications once numerous, and including the *Fireside Companion*, the *Ledger*, and the *Family Story Paper*. Of these, as a second survey of the field discloses, only the *Family Story Paper* survives. It is well provided with "copy," which will never be set, for it follows the custom adopted by its greatest rival of reprinting the fiction its readers liked a generation ago. The nice little old man referred to is no longer to be found at his desk. Even the desk has disappeared, for the *Fireside Companion* has ceased to exist, and the jocular book-keepers have found jobs elsewhere.

A nice little old man was crouching over a big desk, well provided with paste pot, shears, and clippings. He wheeled

around, looked up over a pair of heavy glasses, and under a pair of bushy eyebrows, startled by the question:

"How is the market to-day?"

"What market do you mean?"

"Why, the fiction market, to be sure. Are you buying any 'thrillers' just now?"

"Lord bless you, my boy, of course not. We've got it figured out that the same old stuff that held our grandmothers and great-grandmothers entranced will be about as effective with the granddaughters and great-granddaughters, so we aren't buying anything at all. Reprint of old stories, that's all our paper carries these days."

It was sad news to the hack writer, who had come with an armful of manuscript, only to find he had wasted his time. Like a flash there came back to him a picture of his boyhood, when the *Fireside Companion* had enjoyed a greater relative circulation than any weekly of to-day. An enterprising agent would pass through the village, scattering the publication broadcast at every door, and all the serving maids and children of the neighbourhood would take in the absorbing tales, sometimes as much as six or eight thousand words, to find, just as the hero or heroine had reached some seemingly inextricable entanglement, the legend: "This Thrilling Story of Real Life in a Great City to Be Continued in Our Next." The boy used to read these stories as soon as his sister Mary had finished them, which was, as a rule, about three hours after she had borrowed the paper from the cook. Some day he meant

to write such stories himself, an ambition cherished until one day the Judge caught him with a copy. That copy the Judge carefully took up with the fire-tongs and placed on a bed of live coals. Leading his young hopeful to the library, he remarked: "There, my son, are the works of Scott, of Dickens, of Cooper, of Dumas, of Hugo. Give them a trial, and if you don't like them, come to me and say so, and I'll try you with Paul de Kock and Catulle Mendès."

Here was the boy in the sanctum sanctorum of the great weekly which had fired his early literary ambition, only to be told "there was nothing doing."

The *Fireside Companion* was published in a gigantic and hideous building to the north of the Brooklyn Bridge. In a counting-room on the top floor of this building where two bookkeepers told each other jokes out of last week's comics, the request was made for a moment's interview with the editor.

"Who?"

"The editor."

"We ain't got none."

"I don't know what you call him, but I want to see the man who publishes the *Sea Side Library*."

"What for?"

"I've a corking good French detective story, about 70,000 words, and I thought he might like to buy a translation."

"Well, we ain't buying no new books. Sold the plates of all the old ones, and people put 'em out in new covers. Guess you won't find anything in town on the lines of the old *Sea Side Library*."

In another building, formerly the home of a prosperous weekly of the kind made illustrious by such authors of "Old Cap Collier," Laura Jean Libby, and Bertha M. Clay, a Yellow Newspaper is in possession. There is something significant in this fact, as further investigation into the abandonment of this branch of the publishing industry revealed.

"If you want to know what killed the story weeklies," said a novelist who formerly wrote for them, "I can tell you in three words—the Sunday supplements.

"Of course, there are Sunday supplements and Sunday supplements. Some of the newspapers established a high literary standard for their Sunday feature pages from the first. These didn't interfere with the story weeklies at all, but others went right into their domain, offering for five cents not merely as much highly sensational blood and thunder stuff, but occasionally a good story as well, and all the news. Some of the story weeklies had circulations reaching from 75,000 to 500,000, but the advertising business was revolutionised a decade ago, and the story weeklies failed to get next. I don't know why, exactly, but they never seemed to push this end of the business, which is the only one out of which a modern Sunday newspaper makes a profit, as it would lose money on its circulation with white paper at its present cost, even if it got five cents net on every copy sold; and the bigger the circulation, the bigger the loss. The story weeklies never had much advertising, and what they had was chiefly of

patent medicines, and mail-order concerns. Even these people dropped off to get into the great blanket sheets of the *Sunday Yellows*.

"On top of the evolution in advertising came the flood of cheap magazines, and then the story weeklies ceased to buy original matters. I don't know that the class of fiction in the 'popular' magazines is really any better, but it is tamer, and it always has a happy ending, in this respect resembling the fiction of the old weeklies. Virtue is always rewarded, and the villain is always punished. It may be just that way in real life, but it's always so in the 'popular' magazines, and I'll venture to say that no man who writes for money today would be foolish enough to submit any other kind of fiction to a publisher. Even Kipling had to attempt a happy ending for '*The Light That Failed*,' didn't he?"

Of course, the old-time story paper has been, to some extent, replaced by "libraries of fiction," as well as by the *Sunday Yellows*, and the "popular" magazines, but the same old names, and the same old stories went for years to the remoter parts of the country, even though the literary activity of the author had been cut short by death, as in the case of "*Old Cap Collier*," or marriage, as with Laura Jean Libby, who is living in Brooklyn on the interest of \$500,000 earned by her tales of "heart interest" and writing for a newspaper syndicate. "*Old Cap Collier's*" estate realized something over \$600,000, entirely ac-

cumulated by the sale of detective stories, some of which, by the way, are quite equal to those put out in more pretentious form in these days.

The "libraries of fiction" are managed on a slightly different basis. In order to get them through the mails as "second-class matter," they must be issued "at stated intervals," and the stated interval is usually a week. In this class come the flashy series which are the delight of the present generation of office boys and telegraph messengers. One popular author dictates to relays of stenographers in the upper room of a big building on Seventh Avenue, and generally has two or three stories in hand at once, changing from one to the other for relaxation. Sometimes he grinds out 80,000 or 100,000 words this way in a week—but he writes on salary, and the publisher owns his work. These "thrillers" are put up in compact form, convenient to handle at a desk, or to slip into the pocket if the boss comes prying about. There are any number of "libraries of fiction," but a feature of one and all is the front-page illustration, which is nearly always in colours.

"It's easy money," an artist remarked. "Of course, a man isn't especially proud of having his name signed to this sort of thing, but when you can knock down \$50 for two days' work on a 'library of fiction' cover, you can afford to devote one day to loafing, and four more to 'art for art's sake.' The deuce of it is, there's a tendency towards standardization in art as well as in literature, and the pub-

lishers seemingly prefer to buy an imitation of the work of some of the illustrators who have already acquired national renown, rather than give a fellow a chance to strike out something new for himself."

It may be that the class of publications which have been described haven't much to do with either literature or art, but there's a demand for them passing all understanding of those outside the publishing business. The good old days have gone, however, so far as the writers are concerned, and while the profits of the newer types which have replaced the "story weekly" are as great as ever, they go to swell the bank accounts of the publishers, and there is no longer the opportunity in "thrillers" for an ingenious author to accumulate half a million or more, as in a former generation.

UNDER THE BLACK FLAG

Describing a Cruise Under the Celebrated Captain Barabbas.

Piracy is dying, but not dead. In a recent interview with Naboth Hedin, in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Pastor Wagner expressed the belief that 1,000,000 pirated copies of his "Simple Life" had been sold in America. The young woman who translated the book into English had received \$2,000 for her work, he said, and a promise of six cents on each copy sold. But the book, although covered by French copyright, was not protected by American law, and he was not paid a cent by the original American publisher until John Wanamaker took up cudgels in his behalf. This publisher, who had sold some 200,000 copies, then agreed to pay Pastor Wagner ten cents on each copy sold thereafter, but the pirated editions, offered in cheaper form, supplanted the original American publication, so that his income on 1,200,000 books sold in America was practically nothing. The only profits worth reckoning were, he asserted, derived from royalties on the sale of 50,000 books in France.

The Heathen Chinee has become the

Instrument of retribution against American pirates, but, as sometimes happens in modern warfare, neutrals suffer no less than belligerents. Thus Ginn & Co., school-book publishers, flying the white flag, if ever a publishing concern did, have lost three argosies and five galleons off the coast of Shanghai. Since the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty there has been an enormous demand for educational works of all kinds, especially for those printed in English. President Yuan Shih-Kai has been too busy to take up copyright matters until recently, and, as the Chinese were printing books long before Xenophon and Cæsar invented war correspondence, and have much skill in copying the manufactures of foreign devils, enterprising native publishers have been "complimenting" Ginn & Co. by "swiping" freely. The significance of these words will appear later. The *North China Herald* estimates that American school-book publishers have already lost more than \$500,000 through piracy, but expresses the hope that President Yuan will promulgate a copyright law to punish literary thefts. Meantime, Ginn & Co. are seeking redress in the consular courts, and other American publishers have joined with them.

Reference to law journals will show that piracy on a smaller scale is still by no means uncommon, but it is no longer respectable. The Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers, with headquarters in London, and the Société des Gens de Lettres, with headquarters in Paris, have been labouring for

a generation and more with a view of protecting the author in his literary property, and while constant vigilance is still necessary, thinking people have been educated to the point of considering a literary thief no better than any other kind of a thief. The American Copyright law of 1909 and the present British Copyright act provide jail penalties for convicted pirates, in fact, but I have been assured by one United States Attorney that such conviction is not possible in the United States in the Year of Grace 1915. I trust he may be proven in error, but if the penal clause ever has been enforced, I have no knowledge of it. There is ample material for another story on "Defects in the Copyright Law," and what I purpose here, after establishing the points that piracy is not dead and that it is no longer respectable, is to record the events of a six months' cruise as first mate on a pirate craft commanded by the redoubtable Barabbas, for such was the *nom de guerre* bestowed upon him by his crew.

Some months after I had published my little encyclopedia of music, I received a flattering letter from Barabbas inviting me to call on him to discuss a larger work on the same subject, but along different lines. I replied that my contract with the house issuing my work prohibited me from undertaking another that might conflict with it. He pointed out that no conflict of interests was possible, said he could obtain the consent of my publisher, and renewed his invitation.

Before accepting it, I conferred with

the "Drinking Partner" of the house that issued my book, showed him the letters, and asked him what he knew about Barabbas. "The only man," he said, "who has been able to do business in his special line a score of years without bankruptcy. Discounts his bills, maintains good credit at the bank, lives up to a written contract, makes a lot of money. But tricks! Verb. sap."

Why he should have warned me I don't understand, in the light of what happened, unless he was trying to live up to the tradition that the "Drinking Partner" must always be a good fellow, and square to everybody.

"I am only an ignorant publisher," said Barabbas, "and so I plod along in my dull way, working at something until it begins to look good, and then I have to consult an Eminent Specialist like yourself. I know what I want, but I can't carry it out. I suppose it is more or less insulting for a publisher to talk finance to an author, but if you will forget your family pride for a moment, I would be glad to know, in the event that you have some spare time, how big an insult would be required to induce you to interest yourself in my scheme?"

The amount of the insult being fixed in this Gilbertian fashion, Barabbas invited me to luncheon.

When the coffee was brought on, he poured about a thimbleful in a cup of hot milk, and remarked that he had enjoyed my conversation immensely.

"Luncheons, to an ignorant publisher," he continued, "are more than meat and

drink and recreation. I sometimes get \$50 worth of information from an Eminent Specialist like yourself, and at a trifling cost, even when the Eminent Specialist has a pretty taste in wines."

This frankness partly disarmed me. I took some material home and worked it into the shape he desired, gave him more information, and evidence of my pretty taste in wines, and received a stiff "insult" for my trouble.

"I like your work," said Barabbas at parting. "It should make you famous, and if it doesn't, I will. As soon as you decide to drop that little magazine of yours, with its ridiculous name, I want you to come here to my place, and make yourself at home. I'm just sending through the press a large set of books, and there are two volumes I want you to take personal charge of. Bring your Night Managing Editor to dinner with you to-morrow, and we'll talk over the details."

The Night Managing Editor gave it as her opinion that Barabbas was a fine Christian gentleman, a delightful host, a splendid raconteur, and just the sort of man for an erratic writer to tie up with.

Next week I moved in and soon put two volumes through the press for him, and then, with the written consent of the "Drinking Partner," began to map out the great American encyclopedia, the thing people have been talking about for years, and which never will be printed because no publisher will spend the amount of money it would cost.

Barabbas wasn't sure whether he want-

ed me as Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor, but he gave me a delightful old gentleman as an assistant, and left me to myself.

He was keenly interested in the choice of material, and showed a marked preference for English scholarship, especially of the non-copyrighted kind.

It might have occurred to an Eminent Specialist about this time that wholesale piracy was being planned but for the wisdom of Barabbas. For example, a long essay published some years before by Sir Hubert H. H. Parry, Bart., seemed to fit into the scheme.

"I think we'll 'compliment' Sir Hubert by republishing this," said Barabbas. "There's no risk in 'swiping' any essay of that date bearing only British copyright."

"There's every risk that Sir Hubert might denounce you as a pirate," the Eminent Specialist rejoined. "Besides which, I'll not be a party to such a transaction."

"Very well," said Barabbas, "if you feel that way about it, I suppose instead of 'complimenting' him we'll have to 'insult' him. How small an insult do you suppose he would accept, say £5?"

"I think it ought to be doubled, and in guineas, not pounds."

"Guineas for a Baronet, eh? Well, I'll make a note of it."

Thereafter there was no more talk of "complimenting" or "swiping," and when Crowest, or Grove, or Streatfeild, or Dunstan, or any of a dozen other English writers was dissected and adapted for the American reader, out came the Ig-

norant Publisher's notebook, and the amount of the "insult" to be forwarded to him was carefully written down. In this way the Eminent Specialist unwittingly gave the Ignorant Publisher a pretty clear idea of the cash value of every author dealt with. When it was proposed to use Dunstan's Encyclopedia as a whole, and add to it, the Eminent Specialist advised that a royalty be paid. Barabbas said he never did business on a royalty basis. Furthermore, as the book was the unprotected kind that any American publisher could "swipe," the risk on royalty would be too great. It was agreed in this case that Dunstan's consent should be asked in writing and that he be offered an honorarium of fifty guineas.

The work went along easily and smoothly, the gray-bearded assistant proved a delightful companion, and hardly a day passed without a visit from some of the numerous hacks formerly employed by Barabbas. One of these gentlemen proved highly objectionable to Barabbas, with whom he had quarrelled over a bill. This petty detail had been forgotten by the hack, but not by the Ignorant Publisher. The hack was a minor poet of some distinction, and department editor of a popular weekly. He may be called the Rev. Januarius John, S.T.D., because that wasn't his name. In the office he was known as "Jimmy for Short."

"Jimmy for Short" had one failing not uncommon among the older type of literary men. It caused him to retire from active work in his sacred profession, and

to make rather frequent changes in his business address. His family were greatly relieved when he accepted regular employment on a weekly, because he had the excellent habit of taking his pay-envelope home unopened. A fine talent for reviewing led him into evil ways, without their knowledge. Compensation for book reviews was not included in the weekly pay-envelope, but paid by check, and the books became the property of the reviewer, who might dispose of them in a second-hand book store, if he so desired.

Having visited a book store and several other places one afternoon before coming to see us, "Jimmy for Short" felt inspired to oratory. He had just finished damning his publisher, our publisher, everybody's publisher, and pointing out horrible examples of injustice and oppression, including all then present, and was saying, "Look at me; a gentleman and a scholar, a Grecian, if I may say so, a Latinist, and a poet, compelled in my old age to learn three modern languages in order to gain a paltry—" when Barabbas entered.

Of course the First Mate should have been supervising the work of the crew about this time, holystoning the decks, or preferably splicing the main brace, but Blackbeard when scuttling a ship was never more savage-looking than Barabbas at that moment. He was so angry at the breach of discipline, as he afterwards called it, that he couldn't speak.

"That man has never felt the divine afflatus," said "Jimmy for Short," as the

Pirate disappeared down the main hatch. Soon afterwards he bowed himself out, leaving behind, however, inspiration for these Grecian lines, which he praised heartily some days later:

Oh, Thou, who stain'd with juice of purple grape,
 Girded with skins of fearsome, savage beasts,
 Aud decked with garlands of sweet smelling herbs,
 Hast frolicked with the Graces, dancing and
 Loving through countless golden hours, Hear Me!
 When at the feast the minstrel lyre is pass'd
 Thy praises in my heart I sing, but no
 Responsive voice swells through the air as I
 Caress the strings—Thy servant, Lord, is mute!
 And when the whirl of youths and maidens fair,
 Laughing before me skip, in vain their call;
 Though I would join them, dull and feeble is
 The clay wherein confin'd my spirit strives
 For freedom, and no measure may I tread.
 But, when the cup is fill'd and emptied, and
 I alone am strong, refresh'd—still in my
 Heart I sing Thy praises—dumb then the rest!
 What though the sea born Goddess came herself,
 Zone unloos'd, her amber tresses flying,
 Panting with love—should I desert Thee then?
 Never, Lord! Still pouring from the goblet
 Thy full libation, I quaff the rest, nor
 Other joys I seek, save but to serve Thee,
 Thy faithful flamen. Evohe Bacche!

But such breaches of discipline were infrequent. The work drew nearer completion, and discussion as to the nominal editors was resumed. The Eminent Specialist, holding to the terms of a letter from Barabbas, declined to permit the use of his name, either as Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor, but was willing to become sponsor for a volume on Theory, provided he saw it through the press. This was agreed to, and the Eminent Specialist drifted to a Night Copy Desk.

Proof on the Theory volume was so

long in coming that he felt compelled to write Barabbas that he could not permit the use of his name, even on that volume. And then he forgot books about music for a year or two, until one day he ran across the ten-volume work he had mapped out.

The Ignorant Publisher had indeed omitted the Eminent Specialist's name. But he had obtained the plates of the Eminent Specialist's own encyclopedia from the "Drinking Partner," on payment of \$1,040, and had published it as the work of a Boston music critic! In the litigation that followed it developed that all the English authorities used had been "complimented," not "insulted."

COST OF MAKING BOOKS

Author's Risks Shown to Be Greater than Publisher's.

Every man or woman who writes ought to know something about the cost of manufacturing a book, if only for self-protection. If you are planning a house you have no difficulty in arriving at the cost of real estate, the market price of material and labour, and, if the estimates are carefully made and contracts carried out in accordance with the estimates, you know in advance what the total expense will be, and may fix your rental or selling valuation accordingly. Estimating the cost of a book is far less difficult, although many publishers make a mystery of it, and of the risks they assume. In building a book you may begin by figuring the period of copyright and renewals on the basis of a ground rent. To write a work of given length requires a certain number of hours or days, and each writer may determine the cost of production of his own manuscript. One clever re-write man on a New York newspaper can do six columns or eight thousand words nightly. Joseph Pulitzer thought 500 words daily

a fair output for an editorial writer.

Taking \$10 a thousand words as the cost of producing "copy," the writer's risk in creating material for such a little volume as this would be \$300. Please note, for a reason that shall appear later, in quoting the minimum magazine rate of payment for a manuscript, no allowance is made on behalf of the writer for overhead charges, rent, or machinery. None the less, he must pay the rent of a place in which to work, he must possess some sort of mental machinery, and he can no more escape "overhead" than he can death or taxation.

By economy in stock and binding which would not be apparent to the average reader, this book could be manufactured for \$150. The actual cost of the first edition of 1,000 was:

Composition	\$26
Electrotyping	32
Paper and presswork	45
Stamps and binding	90
 Total	 \$193

There's no mystery about it, you see, and the figures include paper, ink, and cloth. On the other hand, here is a simple explanation of the reason so many publishers ride in automobiles of this year's pattern, while so many writers walk. Walking, of course, is the best of exercise for people of sedentary habits, but why restrict it to the creative class?

The publisher may deny that this manuscript represents a capital of \$300, or that the cost of manufacture of this book can be kept inside \$150, and he will

say with pride that his imprint alone is worth more to the author than both figures combined, for it represents years of honest endeavor, a great reputation, and the good-will of the trade—in other words, of the retail booksellers.

This sounds well, but hear the words of Sir Walter Besant, written for the benefit of his fellow craftsmen: "How is it, then, that so many successes are made with the name of a new and quite small firm? The name of a firm on a title-page is worth exactly nothing to the general public; it carries no weight with the mass of readers; or if any, then there are fifty houses which carry equal weight. The public cares nothing who publishes a book; of all tradesmen the publisher is least regarded by the world."

I was disposed to doubt Sir Walter's statement, but having tried an experiment, found it confirmed. I asked half a dozen patrons of a library who published the works of certain literary stars they had been discussing, without receiving one correct answer. Then I asked my own bookseller which publishers the trade preferred to deal with. "They're all alike," he replied. "A book with us is merchandise, and the book that sells is the book we want to handle, regardless of who the publisher may be, and almost regardless of the author."

"What, then, do publishers actually do for the majority of books?" I gladly credit both question and answer to Sir Walter Besant. "They put them through a mechanical process. This process in-

volves spending a few minutes with a printer and a few minutes with a binder, arranging that they should be paid a certain time after the book is produced, in order to avoid paying any money except from the proceeds of the book."

It is true that most publishers have neither printery nor bindery, and that they pay printers and binders by notes maturing after publication, leaving plates in storage with the printer, and sheets in storage with the binder, thus avoiding warehouse charges. But most publishers will tell you their advertising expenses are enormous, their overhead expenses gigantic, their rent or taxes excessive, their travelling men a burden to stagger philanthropy, their debtors on the verge of bankruptcy, their creditors demanding cash on the nail. These complaints, which most writers have heard from time to time, would indicate inefficiency, if well founded. As a rule, they are not well founded.

Publishers who have house organs exchange advertising space on terms below their rate cards. Publishers having yearly contracts in an approved advertising medium get handsome discounts; and by every contract I have seen, the amount of advertising any book receives is fixed by the publisher. The overhead expenses are no greater in proportion for the publisher than for the writer or the book-seller, and ought not to be reckoned in the cost of publication. Publishing is, in fact, as set forth in the essay on "Becoming a Publisher," *nothing but salesmanship*, and the pub-

lisher can afford to stand these charges, and still be cheerful. Let us see why. There are but three agreements in use in America, as between writer and publisher: outright sale by the author to the publisher, publication at the author's expense, publication on royalty. "Half shares," on which many a British author has cut his wisdom teeth, are unknown here, and need not be discussed.

In these enlightened days no writer sells his copyright at any price. There are too many rights involved. Any one of them may be more productive of cash than publication in book form, and writers who are wise will refuse to sign away the least of these rights without adequate compensation.

Of course, the publisher who issues a book at the author's expense may look cheerful, for he has pocketed both cost and profits in advance.

There remains to be considered the royalty basis of agreement between author and publisher, and here let the author look to himself. He would do well before entering upon a contract to consult "Forms of Agreement," which may be had by mail for a shilling from The Incorporated Society of Authors, 1 Central Buildings, Tothill Street, Westminster, S. W., London, Eng.

For publication on royalty of a book the size of this one the writer, we have seen, must risk \$300 in work, and the publisher half that amount in manufacture. Let us say the royalty is 10 per cent., which would be the average, and the retail price of the book \$1. Results

on the sale of the first edition of 1,000 would be not \$100, but \$90 to the author, less than one-third the estimated value of his contribution to the undertaking, and pay below the space rate of any "metropolitan" newspaper in the United States.

Let us assume that the publisher has spent \$50 in advertising, which would be liberal on his part for so small a book. He has "presented" twelve copies to the author, reserved thirteen sample copies, given away seventy-five copies to reviewers and others. He has sold 900 copies either in his shop at \$1 net, or through the trade at a discount which may amount to 33 1-3 per cent., on large orders. Let us assume the average price has been eighty cents. His account would stand:

To cash receipts.....	\$720
Less cost of mfg.	150
Less advertising bills	50
Less royalty	90
<hr/>	

Profit on transaction \$430

On the later editions the author would receive his full \$100 per M., but the publisher's gain would be greater, for, with the cost of type-setting, plates, and stamps eliminated, and maintaining the same rate of expenditure for printing, binding, and advertising, he would draw down approximately \$500.

To carry this pleasant speculation to a legitimate conclusion, let us imagine that this little book, instead of dealing with cold, hard facts, contained the pleasing kind of short fiction so many people are writing these days, and that the

publisher had succeeded in putting over the form of contract approved by the late and unlamented American Publishers' Association, whereby the writer had divested himself of every right guaranteed him by law except 10 per cent. royalty on book publication in the United States. Instead of the meagre 2,000 copies which is the fondest hope we have indulged in for this little book, such a collection of short stories might easily reach a sale of 50,000. In that case the writer might have received approximately \$5,000, but the cost of manufacture decreases as editions grow in size, and the publisher would have cleared more than \$27,000 on the book, have royalties coming in from theatres and motion-picture houses, and a few thousand dollars in ready cash from the sale of first and second-serial rights, and "sheets" to Great Britain and the Colonies. The Barber of Bagdad's brother could not reckon profits faster!

Authors should insist on a sliding scale of royalties, rising with each thousand copies sold until there be a fair division of profits between producer and middle man, for the publisher at best is no more than that. And they must bear in mind that in a joint undertaking in which the manuscript represents twice as much capital as the cost of manufacturing a book, the risk is chiefly the author's. If the book fails, his investment is lost in the speculation. The publisher, however, still has a chance of recouping himself, by selling out the edition as "remainders," and is almost certain to

recover his expenditures in manufacturing the book. And then he has the plates. Half a century ago a pirate in New York published a great English novel at a price which killed the sale of the authorized edition, and sold the book by tens of thousands. The pirate's heirs in settling his estate sold the plates to a perfectly respectable publisher who now prints from them at a profit, selling this novel to the trade, 750 pages in 10-point-type, 8vo. cloth, at a price which enabled me to buy a copy for twenty-four cents. The reader may figure out the possibilities of sales of "remainders" and of plates for himself, and then he will cease to pity the poor publisher for the risks he takes. The author's risk is unavoidable, but the publisher has only to refuse a manuscript, and send it back at the author's expense, if he believes it involves a risk, and that is what he usually does.

DEFECTS IN COPYRIGHT

American Laws Don't Give Adequate Protection to Authors.

There is a growing feeling among authors on both sides of the Atlantic, voiced with increasing frequency in their publications, that a writer, whether English or American, should be entitled to the same protection of his interests and the same share in the income from his labours at home and abroad. To what extent this feeling is shared by the publishers is less certain, but if it be assumed that they are far from being "the natural enemy of the author," their interest in international relations is less acute because their pocketbooks have been less affected. The author's feeling is shared by R. R. Bowker, editor of the *Publishers' Weekly*, and author of the latest and most comprehensive work on "Copyright, Its History and Its Law."

Answering a series of questions I put to him on behalf of the New York *Evening Post*, and replying affirmatively to the proposition that authors of either country should have equal rights in both, Mr. Bowker, who was one of the framers of the Copyright act of 1909,

said: "The manufacturing clause makes this impossible, and it should be repealed, the only difficulty being the mistaken opposition of the trades unions. In most other respects the law has worked out satisfactorily, and piecemeal amendment is rather dangerous. In my judgment," he added, "the tariff on books should be repealed so soon as the elements of book production are also relieved from tariff burdens."

Authors' rights have undergone an evolution in recent years, for it has been discovered that, besides the profits which may accrue by reason of translation or by serial publication of a work before or after book publication, there are also to be considered dramatic rights, moving-picture rights, and, of perhaps still greater value, foreign rights. It is matter of common knowledge that "foreign rights" as between English and American authors have acquired a cash value only since 1891. Prior to that time, when an English publisher found an American book to his liking, he helped himself freely, reprinting it in full, if he so desired, without compensating either author or publisher. In so doing, he was following the example of the American publisher, who manifested an especial fondness for the works of English novelists, but would reproduce anything which gave promise of sale here.

In vain were the protests of the author. If, as a Londoner, he picked out a New York publisher noted for fair dealing in order to bring out a "complete, authorized edition," there was nothing to prevent

some pirate from underselling him in the American market, and it often happened that some pirate did. Recriminations between the publishers were not less bitter than those between the authors of the two countries, but the publishers were the first to get together on some sort of working basis. Briefly, this was what was known as the "courtesy of the trade." If an American publisher pirated an English book, and made a good thing out of it, he would send a small check to the English publisher. It worked both ways, of course, but distinctly to the disadvantage of the author, whichever way it worked, and it was far from being a satisfactory arrangement for the publishers themselves. It is only fair to add that there are publishing houses in both countries which, even during the "dark age," never sullied themselves by such transactions.

Out of this scandalous situation arose the American Copyright League, presided over in turn by James Russell Lowell and Edmund Clarence Stedman, and including among its warmest supporters George Parsons Lathrop, Mark Twain, Edward Eggleston, Richard Watson Gilder, Robert Underwood Johnson, and George Haven Putnam. The Copyright act of 1909 was the crowning achievement of their labors, and, but for the manufacturing clause already referred to, would speedily bring the United States into the International Copyright Union. Responsibility for this defect is fixed by the *Bulletin* of the Authors' League of America, in these words: "Although also

working for international copyright, the typographical unions, as well as a number of Philadelphia publishers, were not able to act with the Publishers' and Authors' Leagues. It is due to their efforts that the provisions of the manufacturing clause were inserted in the bill."

But, while the restrictions placed upon foreigners by this clause are such that the United States is still effectively debarred from joining a copyright union based on reciprocity, and the 15 per cent. ad-valorem tariff on books acts as a further detriment to interests of authors, under the conditions now existing, both American and English authors may copyright in each other's country, subject to certain restrictions, and the Colonial British market is becoming more and more valuable to Americans. In consequence, both the Authors' League of America and the Incorporated Society of Authors, Composers, and Playwrights of Great Britain are urging their members to insist on proper recognition of foreign rights in the royalty contracts offered them. Both organizations are also at pains to point out that it is not always wise to arrange with one's original publisher a contract for unrestricted foreign rights. Thus, according to the *Author*, which is the journal of the British Society, people in Australia and New Zealand have developed a strong liking for American-made books and bindings, perhaps because they are brighter in display. At any rate, the preference is known to exist, and for this reason English authors who also publish

in America are advised to retain their rights for Australasian publication, and in some cases, to reach that market through the American publisher. Canadians, on the other hand, prefer the more sombre British style of binding, and will buy a book more readily from England than from the United States.

So vast has the market become, according to one observer, that a book which has barely paid expenses in England may sell at a large profit in America, and do equally well in the South Seas. If the author has failed to protect himself in his royalty contract he may lose, under these circumstances, the results of his labour, although the publisher may be reaping a handsome income on an investment in cash much smaller than the author's investment in work. These hints as to Colonial rights are, of course, quite as valuable to the Americans as to the British author.

In a discussion of contracts the *Bulletin* of September, 1914, already quoted, sums up the situation in these words: "If an American book has a fair chance of publication in a separate English edition, under a contract with English publishers, it seemed usually desirable to include the Australian market in the English contract. Otherwise, it seemed advantageous to the author to convey the Australian rights, with the English (United Kingdom) rights, to the American publishers with a view to their endeavoring to sell editions in those territories." If this summing up does not wholly reflect the views of the *Author*, it agrees in sug-

gesting that special arrangements for royalty payments should be made for each piece of territory contracted for.

One American writer who has had experience with book publication in England, as well as at home, expressed himself as being thoroughly in sympathy with the views of Mr. Bowker regarding the repeal of the manufacturing clause in the Copyright act of 1909 and the removal of the tariff on books. Literary productions in English, he thought, were valuable wherever English was spoken, if valuable at all; and, with a sound international copyright and complete reciprocity in the matter of tariff, he believed that both American publishers and American authors would be perfectly willing to take their chances in the English market. The impetus given the publishing business by the removal of all restrictions as to tariff and home manufacture would, he was sure, so enlarge the output of books as to more than compensate for the loss that might result to the printing trade here by foreign competition facilitated by the lower foreign wage-scale.

OPUS IV, AEVIA.

Publishers' Announcements

THE RISE OF DENNIS HATHNAUGHT

**Life of the Common People Across the
Ages as Set Down in the Great
Books of the World**

By JAMES PHILIP McCARTHY.

In this work the history of the struggles of the people throughout the centuries is sketched in an easy, familiar style, making facts more interesting than fiction. Out-of-the-way information seldom met with in ordinary books of history is set forth in entertaining style, and the whole constitutes a picture of the life of the people for more than 3,000 years.

Successively there are treated such subjects as compulsory labor or slavery; serfdom and feudalism; rise of the cities; trade development; crafts; wages; factories; trades-unionism; socialism; syndicalism; feminism—as reflected in the works of historians, novelists, economists, poets, of all ages and nations. It furnishes the historic background so essential to a comprehension of the economic history of mankind. Printed and bound in uniform style with "The Serio-Comic Profession," but double the number of pages. Price \$1.50.

William Marion Reedy, of *Reedy's Mirror*, St. Louis, Mo., who read "Dennis Hathnaught" in the manuscript, said of it: "The style is wonderfully light and buoyant. I wish to congratulate Mr. McCarthy upon the very remarkable extent of his reading."

The Writers' Publishing Co.
Brooklyn-New York, U. S. A.

Publishers' Announcements

THE NEWSPAPER WORKER

Designed For All Who Write, But Addressed
Especially to the Reporter Who May
Have Only a Vague Notion of the
Aims, Scope, and Requirements of His Profession

By JAMES PHILIP McCARTHY.

Dr. Talcott Williams, of the Pulitzer School of Journalism, declares that the instructions to the new reporter about the way to gather material for his stories constitute an original feature and are the best he has seen.

Some copies of the original edition remain on hand, and will be sold at \$1 net. The new edition will be \$1.25 net, postage prepaid.

Chicago Record-Herald:—Packed full of helpful hints and advice to writers, especially reporters.

New York Sun:—Many an experienced reporter may derive useful hints from his advice.

New York American:—If the power to write a fresh, clear and pat story for a daily newspaper can be acquired from any book it must be from the Newspaper Worker.

Boston Herald:—A volume of unusual value.

New York Telegram:—It contains complete analysis of all forms of news showing the points to cover and the

The Writers' Publishing Co.
Brooklyn-New York, U. S. A.

Publishers' Announcements

questions to ask to glean information, and in addition to this, under appropriate headings, are grouped "hint words" that will be found invaluable to the writer. For example, if one is dealing with a murder, "The Newspaper Worker" not only shows just how to handle the case in bringing out the telling points, but furnishes carefully graded lists of words relating to passion and its development which cannot be other than helpful in facilitating writing and doing away with poverty of language.

Another valuable section of the book relates to "Personal and Natural Description." This is gotten up on a plan original with the author of "The Newspaper Worker," and the material is so arranged that, no matter how meagre one's vocabulary, the writer must be a dunce, indeed, if he cannot make use of it. Systematic instructions for the describing of every sort and condition of man and all manner of natural scenes here await the eager writer.

An illuminating chapter concerns the writing and editing of stories, setting forth the best methods of work employed on the leading newspapers. The organization and the work of the composing and press rooms are not neglected, and there are instructive chapters on those little known arts, "Heading Writing" and "Proof-Reading."

Nor is the scientific side of the language overlooked. "The Newspaper Worker" contains complete treatises on grammar and rhetoric as well as on verbal distinctions. The mass of information crowded into these pages is amazing, and the verbal distinctions appear to comprise a digest of the best work of Rich-

**The Writers' Publishing Co.
Brooklyn-New York, U. S. A.**

Publishers' Announcements

ard Grant White, Alfred Ayres, William Cullen Bryant, and other noted students of words.

To the man that is seeking an education with no teacher save himself, "The Newspaper Worker" cannot be other than helpful. It contains a "key" to self-culture and the systematic and intelligent study of literature.

PLAYS, PLAYERS, AND PLAYWRIGHTS

A Survey of the Drama and Its Development in Every Age, and Among Every People

By L. J. de BEKKER.

This book of more than 800 pages, royal octavo size, gives brief biographies of all the important dramatic authors, actors, actresses, and the stories of more than 150 of the world's greatest plays, information about all matters related to the stage, and will, it is hoped, prove a popular guide and reference book for the student and theatre-goer no less than to members of the theatrical profession. The arrangement is alphabetical, and a simple system of cross-references adds greatly to the convenience of those seeking information. The difficulty of obtaining material for a final revision from abroad, owing to the World War, compels the postponement of publication until the autumn of 1916.

The Writers' Publishing Co.
Brooklyn-New York, U. S. A.



31771

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 337 279 4

The Serio-Comic Profession

By L. J. DE BEKKER

A BOOK FOR WRITERS,
AND FOR SUCH READ-
ERS AS MAY BE INTER-
ESTED IN THEM AND
THEIR CRAFT : : :